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AMERICAN STATESMEN

EDITED BY

JOHN T. MORSE, JR.

IN THIRTY-TWO VOLUMES

VOL. XV.

THE JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY
JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

John Quincy Adams

The Home of John Quincy Adams

American Statesmen

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

BY

JOHN T. MORSE, JR.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
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PREFACE

Nearly sixteen years have elapsed since this book was written. In that time sundry inaccuracies have been called to my attention, and have been corrected, and it may be fairly hoped that after the lapse of so long a period all errors in matters of fact have been eliminated. I am not aware that any fresh material has been made public, or that any new views have been presented which would properly lead to alterations in the substance of what is herein said. If I were now writing the book for the first time, I should do what so many of the later contributors to the series have very wisely and advantageously done: I should demand more space. But this was the first volume published, and at a time when the enterprise was still an experiment insistence upon such a point, especially on the part of the editor, would have been unreasonable. Thus it happens that, though Mr. Adams was appointed minister resident at the Hague in 1794, and thereafter continued in public life, almost without interruption, until

his death in February, 1848, the narrative of his career is compressed within little more than three hundred pages. The proper function of a work upon this scale is to draw a picture of the man.

With the picture which I have drawn of Mr. Adams, I still remain moderately contented — by which remark I mean nothing more egotistical than that I believe it to be a correct picture, and done with whatever measure of skill I may happen to possess in portraiture. I should like to change it only in one particular, viz.: by infusing throughout the volume somewhat more of admiration. Adams has never received the praise which was his due, and probably he never will receive it. In order that justice should be done him by the public, his biographer ought to speak somewhat better of him than his real deserts would require. He presents one of those cases where exaggeration is the servant of truth; for this moderate excess of appreciation would only offset that discount from an accurate estimate which his personal unpopularity always has caused, and probably always will cause, to be made. He was a good instance of the rule that the world will for the most part treat the individual as the individual treats the world. Adams was censorious, not to say uncharitable in the

extreme, always in an attitude of antagonism, always unsparing and denunciatory. The measure which he meted has been by others in their turn meted to him. This habit of ungracious criticism was his great fault; perhaps it was almost his only very serious fault; it cost him dear in his life, and has continued to cost his memory dear since his death. Sometimes we are not sorry to see men get the punishments which they have brought on themselves; yet we ought to be sorry for Mr. Adams. After all, his fault-finding was in part the result of his respect for virtue and his hatred of all that was ignoble and unworthy. If he despised a low standard, at least he held his own standard high, and himself lived by the rules by which he measured others. Men with vastly greater defects have been much more kindly served both by contemporaries and by posterity. There can be no question that Adams deserved all the esteem which ought to be accorded to the highest moral qualities, to very high, if a little short of the highest, intellectual endowment, and to immense acquirements. His political integrity was of a grade rarely seen; and, in unison with his extraordinary courage and independence, it seemed to the average politician actually irritating and offensive. He was in the same difficulty

in which Aristides the Just found himself. But neither assaults nor political solitude daunted or discouraged him. His career in the House of Representatives is a tale which has not a rival in congressional history. I regret that it could not be told here at greater length. Stubbornly fighting for freedom of speech and against the slaveholders, fierce and unwearied in old age, falling literally out of the midst of the conflict into his grave, Mr. Adams, during the closing years of his life, is one of the most striking figures of modern times. I beg the reader of this volume to put into its pages more warmth of praise than he will find therein, and so do a more correct justice to an honest statesman and a gallant friend of the oppressed. Doing this, he will improve my book in the particular wherein I think that it chiefly needs improvement.

JOHN T. MORSE, JR.

July, 1898.

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JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND DIPLOMACY

On July 11, 1767, in the North Parish of Braintree, since set off as the town of Quincy, in Massachusetts, was born John Quincy Adams. Two streams of as good blood as flowed in the colony mingled in the veins of the infant. If heredity counts for anything he began life with an excellent chance of becoming famous — *non sine dîs animosus infans.* He was called after his great-grandfather on the mother's side, John Quincy, a man of local note who had borne in his day a distinguished part in provincial affairs. Such a naming was a simple and natural occurrence enough, but Mr. Adams afterward moralized upon it in his characteristic way: —

"The incident which gave rise to this circumstance is not without its moral to my heart. He was dying when I was baptized; and his daughter, my grandmother, present at my birth, requested that I might

receive his name. The fact, recorded by my father at the time, has connected with that portion of my name a charm of mingled sensibility and devotion. It was filial tenderness that gave the name. It was the name of one passing from earth to immortality. These have been among the strongest links of my attachment to the name of Quincy, and have been to me through life a perpetual admonition to do nothing unworthy of it."

Fate, which had made such good preparation for him before his birth, was not less kind in arranging the circumstances of his early training and development. His father was deeply engaged in the patriot cause, and the first matters borne in upon his opening intelligence concerned the public discontent and resistance to tyranny. He was but seven years old when he clambered with his mother to the top of one of the high hills in the neighborhood of his home to listen to the sounds of conflict upon Bunker's Hill, and to watch the flaming ruin of Charlestown. Profound was the impression made upon him by the spectacle, and it was intensified by many an hour spent afterward upon the same spot during the siege and bombardment of Boston. Then John Adams went as a delegate to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia, and his wife and children were left for twelve months, as John Quincy Adams

says, — it is to be hoped with a little exaggeration of the barbarity of British troops toward women and babes, — "liable every hour of the day and of the night to be butchered in cold blood, or taken and carried into Boston as hostages, by any foraging or marauding detachment." Later, when the British had evacuated Boston, the boy, barely nine years old, became "post-rider" between the city and the farm, a distance of eleven miles each way, in order to bring all the latest news to his mother.

Not much regular schooling was to be got amid such surroundings of times and events, but the lad had a natural aptitude or affinity for knowledge which stood him in better stead than could any dame of a village school. The following letter to his father is worth preserving: —

BRAINTREE, *June the 2d*, 1777.

DEAR SIR, — I love to receive letters very well, much better than I love to write them. I make but a poor figure at composition, my head is much too fickle, my thoughts are running after birds' eggs, play and trifles till I get vexed with myself. I have but just entered the 3d volume of Smollett, tho' I had designed to have got it half through by this time. I have determined this week to be more diligent, as Mr. Thaxter will be absent at Court and I Cannot pursue my other Studies. I have Set myself a Stent and determine to read the 3d volume Half out. If

I can but keep my resolution I will write again at the end of the week and give a better account of myself. I wish, Sir, you would give me some instructions with regard to my time, and advise me how to proportion my Studies and my Play, in writing, and I will keep them by me and endeavor to follow them. I am, dear Sir, with a present determination of growing better. Yours.

P. S. Sir, if you will be so good as to favor me with a Blank book, I will transcribe the most remarkable occurrences I mett with in my reading, which will serve to fix them upon my mind.

Not long after the writing of this model epistle, the simple village life was interrupted by an unexpected change. John Adams was sent on a diplomatic journey to Paris, and on February 13, 1778, embarked in the frigate Boston. John Quincy Adams, then eleven years old, accompanied his father and thus made his first acquaintance with the foreign lands where so many of his coming years were to be passed. This initial visit, however, was brief; and he was hardly well established at school when events caused his father to start for home. Unfortunately this return trip was a needless loss of time, since within three months of their setting foot upon American shores the two travellers were again on their stormy way back across the Atlantic in a leaky ship, which had

to land them at the nearest port in Spain. One more quotation must be given from a letter written just after the first arrival in France: —

PASSY, *September the 27th*, 1778.

HONORED MAMMA. — My Pappa enjoins it upon me to keep a Journal, or a Diary of the Events that happen to me, and of objects that I see, and of Characters that I converse with from day to day; and altho' I am Convinced of the utility, importance and necessity of this Exercise, yet I have not patience and perseverance enough to do it so Constantly as I ought. My Pappa, who takes a great deal of pains to put me in the right way, has also advised me to Preserve Copies of all my letters, and has given me a Convenient Blank Book for this end; and altho' I shall have the mortification a few years hence to read a great deal of my Childish nonsense, yet I shall have the Pleasure and advantage of Remarking the several steps by which I shall have advanced in taste, judgment and knowledge. A Journal Book and a letter Book of a Lad of Eleven years old Can not be expected to Contain much of Science, Literature, arts, wisdom, or wit, yet it may serve to perpetuate many observations that I may make, and may hereafter help me to recollect both persons and things that would other ways escape my memory.

He continues with resolutions "to be more thoughtful and industrious for the future," and reflects with pleasure upon the prospect that

his scheme "will be a sure means of improvement to myself, and enable me to be more entertaining to you." What gratification must this letter from one who was quite justified in signing himself her "dutiful and affectionate son" have brought to the Puritan bosom of the good mother at home! If the plan for the diary was not pursued during the first short flitting abroad, it can hardly be laid at the door of the "lad of eleven years" as a serious fault. He did in fact begin it when setting out on the aforementioned second trip to Europe, calling it

A Journal by J. Q. A.,

From America to Spain.

Vol. I.

Begun Friday, 12 of November, 1779.

The spark of life in the great undertaking flickered in a somewhat feeble and irregular way for many years thereafter, but apparently gained strength by degrees until in 1795, as Mr. C. F. Adams tells us, "what may be denominated the diary proper begins," a very vigorous work in more senses than one. Continued with astonishing persistency and faithfulness until within a few days of the writer's death, the latest entry is of the 4th of January, 1848. Mr. Adams achieved many successes

during his life as the result of conscious effort, but the greatest success of all he achieved altogether unconsciously. He left a portrait of himself more full, correct, vivid, and picturesque than has ever been bequeathed to posterity by any other personage of the past ages. Any mistakes which may be made in estimating his mental or moral attributes must be charged to the dulness or prejudice of the judge, who could certainly not ask for better or more abundant evidence. Few of us know our most intimate friends better than any of us may know Mr. Adams, if we will but take the trouble. Even the brief extracts already given from his correspondence show us the boy; it only concerns us to get them into the proper light for seeing them accurately. If a lad of seven, nine, or eleven years of age should write such solemn little effusions amid the surroundings and influences of the present day, he would probably be set down justly enough as either an offensive young prig or a prematurely developed hypocrite. But the precocious Adams had only a little of the prig and nothing of the hypocrite in his nature. Being the outcome of many generations of simple, devout, intelligent Puritan ancestors, living in a community which loved virtue and sought knowledge, all inherited and all present influences

combined to make him, as it may be put in a single word, sensible. He had inevitably a mental boyhood and youth, but morally he was never either a child or a lad; all his leading traits of character were as strongly marked when he was seven as when he was seventy, and at an age when most young people simply win love or cause annoyance, he was preferring wisdom to mischief, and actually in his earliest years was attracting a certain respect.

These few but bold and striking touches which paint the boy are changed for an infinitely more elaborate and complex presentation from the time when the Diary begins. Even as abridged in the printing, this immense work ranks among the half-dozen longest diaries to be found in any library, and it is unquestionably by far the most valuable. Henceforth we are to travel along its broad route to the end; we shall see in it both the great and the small among public men halting onward in a way very different from that in which they march along the stately pages of the historian, and we shall find many side-lights, by no means colorless, thrown upon the persons and events of the procession. The persistence, fulness, and faithfulness with which it was kept throughout so busy a life are marvellous, but are also highly characteristic of the most persevering and in-

dustrious of men. That it has been preserved is cause not only for thankfulness but for some surprise also. For if its contents had been known, it is certain that all the public men of nearly two generations who figure in it would have combined into one vast and irresistible conspiracy to obtain and destroy it. There was always a superfluity of gall in the diarist's ink. Sooner or later every man of any note in the United States was mentioned in his pages, and there is scarcely one of them, who, if he could have read what was said of him, would not have preferred the ignominy of omission. As one turns the leaves he feels as though he were walking through a graveyard of slaughtered reputations wherein not many headstones show a few words of measured commendation. It is only the greatness and goodness of Mr. Adams himself which relieve the universal atmosphere of sadness far more depressing than the melancholy which pervades the novels of George Eliot. The reader who wishes to retain any comfortable degree of belief in his fellow men will turn to the wall all the portraits in the gallery except only the inimitable one of the writer himself. For it would be altogether too discouraging to think that so wide an experience of men as Mr. Adams enjoyed through his long, varied, and active life must lead to such an unpleasant ar-

ray of human faces as those which are scattered along these twelve big octavos. Fortunately at present we have to do with only one of these likenesses, and that one we are able to admire while knowing also that it is beyond question accurate. One after another every trait of Mr. Adams comes out; we shall see that he was a man of a very high and noble character veined with some very notable and disagreeable blemishes; his aspirations were honorable, even the lowest of them being more than simply respectable; he had an avowed ambition, but it was of that pure kind which led him to render true and distinguished services to his countrymen; he was not only a zealous patriot, but a profound believer in the sound and practicable tenets of the liberal political creed of the United States; he had one of the most honest and independent natures that was ever given to man; personal integrity of course goes without saying, but he had the rarer gift of an elevated and rigid political honesty such as has been unfrequently seen in any age or any nation; in times of severe trial this quality was even cruelly tested, but we shall never see it fail; he was as courageous as if he had been a fanatic; indeed, for a long part of his life to maintain a single-handed fight in support of a despised or unpopular opinion seemed his natural function and almost exclu-

sive calling; he was thoroughly conscientious and never knowingly did wrong, nor even sought to persuade himself that wrong was right; well read in literature and of wide and varied information in nearly all matters of knowledge, he was more especially remarkable for his acquirements in the domain of politics, where indeed they were vast and ever growing; he had a clear and generally a cool head, and was nearly always able to do full justice to himself and to his cause; he had an indomitable will, unconquerable persistence, and infinite laboriousness. Such were the qualities which made him a great statesman; but unfortunately we must behold a hardly less striking reverse to the picture, in the faults and shortcomings which made him so unpopular in his lifetime that posterity is only just beginning to forget the prejudices of his contemporaries and to render concerning him the judgment which he deserves. Never did a man of pure life and just purposes have fewer friends or more enemies than John Quincy Adams. His nature, said to have been very affectionate in his family relations, was in its aspect outside of that small circle singularly cold and repellent. If he could ever have gathered even a small personal following his character and abilities would have insured him a brilliant and prolonged success; but, for a man

of his calibre and influence, we shall see him as one of the most lonely and desolate of the great men of history; instinct led the public men of his time to range themselves against him rather than with him, and we shall find them fighting beside him only when irresistibly compelled to do so by policy or strong convictions. As he had little sympathy with those with whom he was brought in contact, so he was very uncharitable in his judgment of them; and thus having really a low opinion of so many of them he could indulge his vindictive rancor without stint; his invective, always powerful, will sometimes startle us by its venom, and we shall be pained to see him apt to make enemies for a good cause by making them for himself.

This has been, perhaps, too long a lingering upon the threshold. But Mr. Adams's career in public life stretched over so long a period that to write a full historical memoir of him within the limited space of this volume is impossible. All that can be attempted is to present a sketch of the man with a few of his more prominent surroundings against a very meagre and insufficient background of the history of the times. So it may be permissible to begin with a general outline of his figure, to be filled in, shaded, and colored as we proceed. At best our task is much more difficult of satisfactory

achievement than an historical biography of the customary elaborate order.

During his second visit to Europe, our mature youngster — if the word may be used of Mr. Adams even in his earliest years — began to see a good deal of the world and to mingle in very distinguished society. For a brief period he got a little schooling, first at Paris, next at Amsterdam, and then at Leyden; altogether the amount was insignificant, since he was not quite fourteen years old when he actually found himself engaged in a diplomatic career. Francis Dana, afterward Chief Justice of Massachusetts, was then accredited as an envoy to Russia from the United States, and he took Mr. Adams with him as his private secretary. Not much came of the mission, but it was a valuable experience for a lad of his years. Upon his return he spent six months in travel and then he rejoined his father in Paris, where that gentleman was engaged with Franklin and John Jay in negotiating the final treaty of peace between the revolted colonies and the mother country. The boy "was at once enlisted in the service as an additional secretary, and gave his help to the preparation of the papers necessary to the completion of that instrument which dispersed all possible doubt of the Independence of his Country."

On April 26, 1785, arrived the packet-ship Le Courier de L'Orient, bringing a letter from Mr. Gerry containing news of the appointment of John Adams as Minister to St. James's. This unforeseen occurrence made it necessary for the younger Adams to determine his own career, which apparently he was left to do for himself. He was indeed a singular young man, not unworthy of such confidence! The glimpses which we get of him during this stay abroad show him as the associate upon terms of equality with grown men of marked ability and exercising important functions. He preferred diplomacy to dissipation, statesmen to mistresses, and in the midst of all the temptations of the gayest capital in the world, the chariness with which he sprinkled his wild oats amid the alluring gardens chiefly devoted to the culture of those cereals might well have brought a blush to the cheeks of some among his elders, at least if the tongue of slander wags not with gross untruth concerning the colleagues of John Adams. But he was not in Europe to amuse himself, though at an age when amusement is natural and a tinge of sinfulness is so often pardoned; he was there with the definite and persistent purpose of steady improvement and acquisition. At his age most young men play the cards which a kind fortune puts into their hands, with the

reckless intent only of immediate gain, but from the earliest moment when he began the game of life Adams coolly and wisely husbanded every card which came into his hand, with a steady view to probable future contingencies, and with the resolve to win in the long run. So now the resolution which he took in the present question illustrated the clearness of his mind and the strength of his character. To go with his father to England would be to enjoy a life precisely fitted to his natural and acquired tastes, to mingle with the men who were making history, to be cognizant of the weightiest of public affairs, to profit by all that the grandest city in the world had to show. It was easy to be not only allured by the prospect but also to be deceived by its apparent advantages. Adams, however, had the sense and courage to turn his back on it, and to go home to the meagre shores and small society of New England, there to become a boy again, to enter Harvard College, and come under all its at that time rigid and petty regulations. It almost seems a mistake, but it was not. Already he was too ripe and too wise to blunder. He himself gives us his characteristic and sufficient reasons: —

"Were I now to go with my father probably my immediate satisfaction might be greater than it will

be in returning to America. After having been travelling for these seven years almost and all over Europe, and having been in the world and among company for three; to return to spend one or two years in the pale of a college, subjected to all the rules which I have so long been freed from; and afterwards not expect (however good an opinion I may have of myself) to bring myself into notice under three or four years more, if ever! It is really a prospect somewhat discouraging for a youth of my ambition, (for I have ambition though I hope its object is laudable). But still

'Oh! how wretched
Is that poor man, that hangs on Princes' favors,'

or on those of any body else. I am determined that so long as I shall be able to get my own living in an honorable manner, I will depend upon no one. My father has been so much taken up all his lifetime with the interests of the public, that his own fortune has suffered by it: so that his children will have to provide for themselves, which I shall never be able to do if I loiter away my precious time in Europe and shun going home until I am forced to it. With an ordinary share of common sense, which I hope I enjoy, at least in America I can live *independent* and *free;* and rather than live otherwise I would wish to die before the time when I shall be left at my own discretion. I have before me a striking example of the distressing and humiliating situation a person is reduced to by adopting a different line of conduct, and I am determined not to fall into the same error."

It is needless to comment upon such spirit and sense, or upon such just appreciation of what was feasible, wise, and right for him, as a New Englander whose surroundings and prospects were widely different from those of the society about him. He must have been strongly imbued by nature with the instincts of his birthplace to have formed, after a seven years' absence at his impressible age, so correct a judgment of the necessities and possibilities of his own career in relationship to the people and ideas of his own country.

Home accordingly he came, and by assiduity prepared himself in a very short time to enter the junior class at Harvard College, whence he was graduated in high standing in 1787. From there he went to Newburyport, then a thriving and active seaport enriched by the noble trade of privateering in addition to more regular maritime business, and entered as a law student the office of Theophilus Parsons, afterwards the Chief Justice of Massachusetts. On July 15, 1790, being twenty-three years old, he was admitted to practice. Immediately afterward he established himself in Boston, where for a time he felt strangely solitary. Clients of course did not besiege his doors in the first year, and he appears to have waited rather stubbornly than cheerfully for more active days. These

came in good time, and during the second, third, and fourth years, his business grew apace to encouraging dimensions.

He was, however, doing other work than that of the law, and much more important in its bearing upon his future career. He could not keep his thoughts, nor indeed his hands, from public affairs. When, in 1791, Thomas Paine produced the "Rights of Man," Thomas Jefferson acting as midwife to usher the bantling before the people of the United States, Adams's indignation was fired, and he published anonymously a series of refuting papers over the signature of Publicola. These attracted much attention, not only at home but also abroad, and were by many attributed to John Adams. Two years later, during the excitement aroused by the reception and subsequent outrageous behavior here of the French minister, Genet, Mr. Adams again published in the Boston "Centinel" some papers over the signature of Marcellus, discussing with much ability the then new and perplexing question of the neutrality which should be observed by this country in European wars. These were followed by more, over the signature of Columbus, and afterward by still more in the name of Barnevelt, all strongly reprobating the course of the crazy-headed foreigner. The writer was not

permitted to remain long unknown. It is not certain, but it is highly probable, that to these articles was due the nomination which Mr. Adams received shortly afterward from President Washington, as Minister Resident at the Hague. This nomination was sent in to the Senate, May 29, 1794, and was unanimously confirmed on the following day. It may be imagined that the change from the moderate practice of his Boston law office to a European court, of which he so well knew the charms, was not distasteful to him. There are passages in his Diary which indicate that he had been chafing with irrepressible impatience "in that state of useless and disgraceful insignificancy," to which, as it seemed to him, he was relegated, so that at the age of twenty-five, when "many of the characters who were born for the benefit of their fellow creatures, have rendered themselves conspicuous among their contemporaries, . . . I still find myself as obscure, as unknown to the world, as the most indolent or the most stupid of human beings." Entertaining such a restless ambition, he of course accepted the proffered office, though not without some expression of unexplained doubt. October 31, 1794, found him at the Hague, after a voyage of considerable peril in a leaky ship, commanded by a blundering captain. He was a young dip-

lomat, indeed; it was on his twenty-seventh birthday that he received his commission.

The minister made his advent upon a tumultuous scene. All Europe was getting under arms in the long and desperate struggle with France. Scarcely had he presented his credentials to the Stadtholder ere that dignitary was obliged to flee before the conquering standards of the French. Pichegru marched into the capital city of the Low Countries, hung out the tri-color, and established the "Batavian Republic" as the ally of France. The diplomatic representatives of most of the European powers forthwith left, and Mr. Adams was strongly moved to do the same, though for reasons different from those which actuated his compeers. He was not, like them, placed in an unpleasant position by the new condition of affairs, but on the contrary he was very cordially treated by the French and their Dutch partisans, and was obliged to fall back upon his native prudence to resist their compromising overtures and dangerous friendship. Without giving offence he yet kept clear of entanglements, and showed a degree of wisdom and skill which many older and more experienced Americans failed to evince, either abroad or at home, during these exciting years. But he appeared to be left without occupation in the

altered condition of affairs, and therefore was considering the propriety of returning, when advices from home induced him to stay. Washington especially wrote that he must not think of retiring, and prophesied that he would soon be "found at the head of the diplomatic corps, be the government administered by whomsoever the people may choose." He remained, therefore, at the Hague, a shrewd and close observer of the exciting events occurring around him, industriously pursuing an extensive course of study and reading, making useful acquaintances, acquiring familiarity with foreign languages, with the usages of diplomacy and the habits of distinguished society. He had little public business to transact, it is true; but at least his time was well spent for his own improvement.

An episode in his life at the Hague was his visit to England, where he was directed to exchange ratifications of the treaty lately negotiated by Mr. Jay. But a series of vexatious delays, apparently maliciously contrived, detained him so long that upon his arrival he found this specific task already accomplished by Mr. Deas. He was probably not disappointed that his name thus escaped connection with engagements so odious to a large part of the nation. He had, however, some further

business of an informal character to transact with Lord Grenville, and in endeavoring to conduct it found himself rather awkwardly placed. He was not minister to the Court of St. James, having been only vaguely authorized to discuss certain arrangements in a tentative way, without the power to enter into any definitive agreement. But the English Cabinet strongly disliking Mr. Deas, who in the absence of Mr. Pinckney represented for the time the United States, and much preferring to negotiate with Mr. Adams, sought by many indirect and artful subterfuges to thrust upon him the character of a regularly accredited minister. He had much ado to avoid, without offence, the assumption of functions to which he had no title, but which were with designing courtesy forced upon him. His cool and moderate temper, however, carried him successfully through the whole business, alike in its social and its diplomatic aspect.

Another negotiation, of a private nature also, he brought to a successful issue during these few months in London. He made the acquaintance of Miss Louisa Catherine Johnson, daughter of Joshua Johnson, then American Consul at London, and niece of that Governor Johnson, of Maryland, who had signed the Declaration of Independence and was afterwards placed on

the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States. To this lady he became engaged; and returning not long afterward he was married to her on July 26, 1797. It was a thoroughly happy and, for him, a life-long union.

President Washington, toward the close of his second term, transferred Mr. Adams to the Court of Portugal. But before his departure thither his destination was changed. Some degree of embarrassment was felt about this time concerning his further continuance in public office, by reason of his father's accession to the Presidency. He wrote to his mother a manly and spirited letter, rebuking her for carelessly dropping an expression indicative of a fear that he might look for some favor at his father's hands. He could neither solicit nor expect anything, he justly said, and he was pained that his mother should not know him better than to entertain any apprehension of his feeling otherwise. It was a perplexing position in which the two were placed. It would be a great hardship to cut short the son's career because of the success of the father, yet the reproach of nepotism could not be lightly encountered, even with the backing of clear consciences. Washington came kindly to the aid of his doubting successor, and in a letter highly complimentary to Mr. John Quincy Adams strongly urged that

well-merited promotion ought not to be kept from him, foretelling for him a distinguished future in the diplomatic service. These representations prevailed; and the President's only action as concerned his son consisted in changing his destination from Portugal to Prussia, both missions being at that time of the same grade, though that to Prussia was then established for the first time by the making and confirming of this nomination.

To Berlin, accordingly, Mr. Adams proceeded in November, 1797, and had the somewhat cruel experience of being "questioned at the gates by a dapper lieutenant, who did not know, until one of his private soldiers explained to him, who the United States of America were." Overcoming this unusual obstacle to a ministerial advent, and succeeding, after many months, in getting through all the introductory formalities, he found not much more to be done at Berlin than there had been at the Hague. But such useful work as was open to him he accomplished in the shape of a treaty of amity and commerce between Prussia and the United States. This having been duly ratified by both the powers, his further stay seemed so useless that he wrote home suggesting his readiness to return; and while awaiting a reply he travelled through some portions of Europe which he had not before

seen. His recall was one of the last acts of his father's administration, made, says Mr. Seward, "that Mr. Jefferson might have no embarrassment in that direction," but quite as probably dictated by a vindictive desire to show how wide was the gulf of animosity which had opened between the family of the disappointed ex-President and his triumphant rival.

Mr. Adams, immediately upon his arrival at home, prepared to return to the practice of his profession. It was not altogether an agreeable transition from an embassy at the courts of Europe to a law office in Boston, with the necessity of furbishing up long disused knowledge, and a second time patiently awaiting the influx of clients. But he faced it with his stubborn temper and practical sense. The slender promise which he was able to discern in the political outlook could not fail to disappoint him, since his native predilections were unquestionably and strongly in favor of a public career. During his absence party animosities had been developing rapidly. The first great party victory since the organization of the government had just been won, after a very bitter struggle, by the Republicans or Democrats, as they were then indifferently called, whose exuberant delight found its full counterpart in the angry despondency of the Federalists. That irascible old gentle-

man, the elder Adams, having experienced a very Waterloo defeat in the contest for the Presidency, had ridden away from the capital, actually in a wild rage, on the night of the 3d of March, 1801, to avoid the humiliating pageant of Mr. Jefferson's inauguration. Yet far more fierce than this natural party warfare was the internal dissension which rent the Federal party in twain. Those cracks upon the surface and subterraneous rumblings, which the experienced observer could for some time have noted, had opened with terrible uproar into a gaping chasm, when John Adams, still in the Presidency, suddenly announced his determination to send a mission to France at a crisis when nearly all his party were looking for war. Perhaps this step was, as his admirers claim, an act of pure and disinterested statesmanship. Certainly its result was fortunate for the country at large. But for John Adams it was ruinous. At the moment when he made the bold move, he doubtless expected to be followed by his party. Extreme was his disappointment and boundless his wrath, when he found that he had at his back only a fraction, not improbably less than half, of that party. He learned with infinite chagrin that he had only a divided empire with a private individual; that it was not safe for him, the President of the United States, to

originate any important measure without first consulting a lawyer quietly engaged in the practice of his profession in New York; that, in short, at least a moiety, in which were to be found the most intelligent members, of the great Federal party, when in search of guidance, turned their faces toward Alexander Hamilton rather than toward John Adams. These Hamiltonians by no means relished the French mission, so that from this time forth a schism of intense bitterness kept the Federal party asunder, and John Adams hated Alexander Hamilton with a vigor not surpassed in the annals of human antipathies. His rage was not assuaged by the conduct of this dreaded foe in the presidential campaign; and the defeated candidate always preferred to charge his failure to Hamilton's machinations rather than to the real will of the people. This, however, was unfair; it was perfectly obvious that a majority of the nation had embraced Jeffersonian tenets, and that Federalism was moribund.

To this condition of affairs John Quincy Adams returned. Fortunately he had been compelled to bear no part in the embroilments of the past, and his sagacity must have led him, while listening with filial sympathy to the interpretations placed upon events by his incensed parent, yet to make liberal allowance for the

distorting effects of the old gentleman's rage. Still it was in the main only natural for him to regard himself as a Federalist of the Adams faction. His proclivities had always been with that party. In Massachusetts the educated and well-to-do classes were almost unanimously of that way of thinking. The select coterie of gentlemen in the State, who in those times bore an active and influential part in politics, were nearly all Hamiltonians, but the adherents of President Adams were numerically strong. Nor was the younger Adams himself long left without his private grievance against Mr. Jefferson, who promptly used the authority vested in him by a new statute to remove Mr. Adams from the position of commissioner in bankruptcy, to which, at the time of his resuming business, he had been appointed by the judge of the district court. Long afterward Jefferson sought to escape the odium of this apparently malicious and, for those days, unusual action, by a very Jeffersonian explanation, tolerably satisfactory to those persons who believed it.

On April 5, 1802, Mr. Adams was chosen by the Federalists of Boston to represent them in the State Senate. The office was at that time still sought by men of the best ability and position, and though it was hardly a step upward on the political ladder for one who had

represented the nation in foreign parts for eight years, yet Mr. Adams was well content to accept it. At least it reopened the door of political life, and moreover one of his steadfast maxims was never to refuse any function which the people sought to impose upon him. It is worth noting, for its bearing upon controversies soon to be encountered in this narrative, that forty-eight hours had not elapsed after Mr. Adams had taken his seat before he ventured upon a display of independence which caused much irritation to his Federalist associates. He had the hardihood to propose that the Federalist majority in the legislature should permit the Republican minority to enjoy a proportional representation in the council. "It was the first act of my legislative life," he wrote many years afterward, "and it marked the principle by which my whole public life has been governed from that day to this. My proposal was unsuccessful, and perhaps it forfeited whatever confidence might have been otherwise bestowed upon me as a party follower." Indeed, all his life long Mr. Adams was never submissive to the party whip, but voted upon every question precisely according to his opinion of its merits, without the slightest regard to the political company in which for the time being he might find himself. A compeer of his in the United

States Senate once said of him, that he regarded every public measure which came up as he would a proposition in Euclid, abstracted from any party considerations. These frequent derelictions of his were at first forgiven with a magnanimity really very creditable, so long as it lasted, especially to the Hamiltonians in the Federal party; and so liberal was this forbearance that when in February, 1803, the legislature had to elect a Senator to the United States Senate, he was chosen upon the fourth ballot by 86 votes out of 171. This was the more gratifying to him and the more handsome on the part of the anti-Adams men in the party, because the place was eagerly sought by Timothy Pickering, an old man who had strong claims growing out of an almost life-long and very efficient service in their ranks, and who was moreover a most stanch adherent of General Hamilton.

So in October, 1803, we find Mr. Adams on his way to Washington, the raw and unattractive village which then constituted the national capital, wherein there was not, as the pious New Englander instantly noted, a church of any denomination; but those who were religiously disposed were obliged to attend services "usually performed on Sundays at the Treasury Office and at the Capitol." With what anticipations Mr. Adams's mind was filled during his journey

to this embryotic city his Diary does not tell; but if they were in any degree cheerful or sanguine they were destined to cruel disappointment. He was now probably to appreciate for the first time the fierce vigor of the hostility which his father had excited. In Massachusetts social connections and friendships probably mitigated the open display of rancor to which in Washington full sway was given. It was not only the Republican majority who showed feelings which in them were at least fair if they were strong, but the Federal minority were maliciously pleased to find in the son of the ill-starred John Adams a victim on whom to vent that spleen and abuse which were so provokingly ineffective against the solid working majority of their opponents in Congress. The Republicans trampled upon the Federalists, and the Federalists trampled on John Quincy Adams. He spoke seldom, and certainly did not weary the Senators, yet whenever he rose to his feet he was sure of a cold, too often almost an insulting, reception. By no chance or possibility could anything which he said or suggested please his prejudiced auditors. The worst augury for any measure was his support; any motion which he made was sure to be voted down, though not unfrequently substantially the same matter being afterward moved by somebody else would

be readily carried. That cordiality, assistance, and sense of fellowship which Senators from the same State customarily expect and obtain from each other could not be enjoyed by him. For shortly after his arrival in Washington, Mr. Pickering had been chosen to fill a vacancy in the other Massachusetts senatorship, and appeared upon the scene as a most unwelcome colleague. For a time, indeed, an outward semblance of political comradeship was maintained between them, but it would have been folly for an Adams to put faith in a Pickering, and perhaps *vice versa*. This position of his, as the unpopular member of an unpopular minority, could not be misunderstood, and many allusions to it occur in his Diary. One day he notes a motion rejected; another day, that he has "nothing to do but to make fruitless opposition;" he constantly recites that he has voted with a small minority, and at least once he himself composed the whole of that minority; soon after his arrival he says that an amendment proposed by him "will certainly not pass; and, indeed, I have already seen enough to ascertain that no amendments of my proposing will obtain in the Senate as now filled;" again, "I presented my three resolutions, which raised a storm as violent as I expected;" and on the same day he writes, "I have no doubt of incurring much censure

and obloquy for this measure;" a day or two later he speaks of certain persons "who hate me rather more than they love any principle;" when he expressed an opinion in favor of ratifying a treaty with the Creeks, he remarks quite philosophically, that he believes it "surprised almost every member of the Senate, and dissatisfied almost all;" when he wanted a committee raised he did not move it himself, but suggested the idea to another Senator, for "I knew that if I moved it a spirit of jealousy would immediately be raised against doing anything." Writing once of some resolutions which he intended to propose, he says that they are "another feather against a whirlwind. A desperate and fearful cause in which I have embarked, but I must pursue it or feel myself either a coward or a traitor." Another time we find a committee, of which he was a member, making its report when he had not even been notified of its meeting.

It would be idle to suppose that any man could be sufficiently callous not to feel keenly such treatment. Mr. Adams was far from callous and he felt it deeply. But he was not crushed or discouraged by it, as weaker spirits would have been, nor betrayed into any acts of foolish anger which must have recoiled upon himself. In him warm feelings were found in singular

combination with a cool head. An unyielding temper and an obstinate courage, an invincible confidence in his own judgment, and a stern conscientiousness carried him through these earlier years of severe trial as they had afterwards to carry him through many more. "The qualities of mind most peculiarly called for," he reflects in the Diary, "are firmness, perseverance, patience, coolness, and forbearance. The prospect is not promising; yet the part to act may be as honorably performed as if success could attend it." He understood the situation perfectly and met it with a better skill than that of the veteran politician. By a long and tedious but sure process he forced his way to steadily increasing influence, and by the close of his fourth year we find him taking a part in the business of the Senate which may be fairly called prominent and important. He was conquering success.

But if Mr. Adams's unpopularity was partly due to the fact that he was the son of his father, it was also largely attributable not only to his unconciliatory manners but to more substantial habits of mind and character. It is probably impossible for any public man, really independent in his political action, to lead a very comfortable life amid the struggles of party. Under the disadvantages involved in this habit Mr.

Adams labored to a remarkable degree. Since parties were first organized in this Republic no American statesman has ever approached him in persistent freedom of thought, speech, and action. He was regarded as a Federalist, but his Federalism was subject to many modifications; the members of that party never were sure of his adherence, and felt bound to him by no very strong ties of political fellowship. Towards the close of his senatorial term he recorded, in reminiscence, that he had more often voted with the administration than with the opposition.

The first matter of importance concerning which he was obliged to act was the acquisition of Louisiana and its admission as a state of the Union. The Federalists were bitterly opposed to this measure, regarding it as an undue strengthening of the South and of the slavery influence, to the destruction of the fair balance of power between the two great sections of the country. It was not then the moral aspect of the slavery element which stirred the northern temper, but only the antagonism of interests between the commercial cities of the North and the agricultural communities of the South. In the discussions and votes which took place in this business Mr. Adams was in favor of the purchase, but denied with much emphasis the constitutionality of the process by which the

purchased territory was brought into the fellowship of States. This imperfect allegiance to the party gave more offence than satisfaction, and he found himself soundly berated in leading Federalist newspapers in New England, and angrily threatened with expulsion from the party. But in the famous impeachment of Judge Chase, which aroused very strong feelings, Mr. Adams was fortunately able to vote for acquittal. He regarded this measure, as well as the impeachment of Judge Pickering at the preceding session, as parts of an elaborate scheme on the part of the President for degrading the national judiciary and rendering it subservient to the legislative branch of the government. So many, however, even of Mr. Jefferson's stanch adherents revolted against his requisitions on this occasion, and he himself so far lost heart before the final vote was taken, that several Republicans voted with the Federalists, and Mr. Adams could hardly claim much credit with his party for standing by them in this emergency.

It takes a long while for such a man to secure respect, and great ability for him ever to achieve influence. In time, however, Mr. Adams saw gratifying indications that he was acquiring both, and in February, 1806, we find him writing: —

"This is the third session I have sat in Congress.

I came in as a member of a very small minority, and during the two former sessions almost uniformly avoided to take a lead; any other course would have been dishonest or ridiculous. On the very few and unimportant objects which I did undertake, I met at first with universal opposition. The last session my influence rose a little, at the present it has hitherto been apparently rising."

He was so far a cool and clear-headed judge, even in his own case, that this encouraging estimate may be accepted as correct upon his sole authority without other evidence. But the fair prospect was overcast almost in its dawning, and a period of supreme trial and of apparently irretrievable ruin was at hand.

Topics were coming forward for discussion concerning which no American could be indifferent, and no man of Mr. Adams's spirit could be silent. The policy of Great Britain towards this country, and the manner in which it was to be met, stirred profound feelings and opened such fierce dissensions as it is now difficult to appreciate. For a brief time Mr. Adams was to be a prominent actor before the people. It is fortunately needless to repeat, as it must ever be painful to remember, the familiar and too humiliating tale of the part which France and England were permitted for so many years to play in our national politics, when our par-

ties were not divided upon American questions, but wholly by their sympathies with one or other of these contending European powers. Under Washington the English party had, with infinite difficulty, been able to prevent their adversaries from fairly enlisting the United States as active partisans of France, in spite of the fact that most insulting treatment was received from that country. Under John Adams the same so-called British faction had been baulked in their hope of precipitating a war with the French. Now in Mr. Jefferson's second administration, the French party having won the ascendant, the new phase of the same long struggle presented the question, whether or not we should be drawn into a war with Great Britain. Grave as must have been the disasters of such a war in 1806, grave as they were when the war actually came six years later, yet it is impossible to recall the provocations which were inflicted upon us without almost regretting that prudence was not cast to the winds and any woes encountered in preference to unresisting submission to such insolent outrages. Our gorge rises at the narration three quarters of a century after the acts were done.

Mr. Adams took his position early and boldly. In February, 1806, he introduced into the Senate certain resolutions strongly condemnatory of

the right, claimed and vigorously exercised by the British, of seizing neutral vessels employed in conducting with the enemies of Great Britain any trade which had been customarily prohibited by that enemy in time of peace. This doctrine was designed to shut out American merchants from certain privileges in trading with French colonies, which had been accorded only since France had become involved in war with Great Britain. The principle was utterly illegal and extremely injurious. Mr. Adams, in his first resolution, stigmatized it "as an unprovoked aggression upon the property of the citizens of these United States, a violation of their neutral rights, and an encroachment upon their national independence." By his second resolution, the President was requested to demand and insist upon the restoration of property seized under this pretext, and upon indemnification for property already confiscated. By a rare good fortune, Mr. Adams had the pleasure of seeing his propositions carried, only slightly modified by the omission of the words "to insist." But they were carried, of course, by Republican votes, and they by no means advanced their mover in the favor of the Federalist party. Strange as it may seem, that party, of which many of the foremost supporters were engaged in the very commerce which Great

Britain aimed to suppress and destroy, seemed not to be so much incensed against her as against their own government. The theory of the party was, substantially, that England had been driven into these measures by the friendly tone of our government towards France, and by her own stringent and overruling necessities. The cure was not to be sought in resistance, not even in indignation and remonstrance addressed to that power, but rather in cementing an alliance with her, and even, if need should be, in taking active part in her holy cause. The feeling seemed to be that we merited the chastisement because we had not allied ourselves with the chastiser. These singular notions of the Federalists, however, were by no means the notions of Mr. John Quincy Adams, as we shall soon see.

On April 18, 1806, the Non-importation Act received the approval of the President. It was the first measure indicative of resentment or retaliation which was taken by our government. When it was upon its passage it encountered the vigorous resistance of the Federalists, but received the support of Mr. Adams. On May 16, 1806, the British government made another long stride in the course of lawless oppression of neutrals, which phrase, as commerce then was, signified little else than Americans. A

proclamation was issued declaring the whole coast of the European continent, from Brest to the mouth of the Elbe, to be under blockade. In fact, of course, the coast was not blockaded, and the proclamation was a falsehood, an unjustifiable effort to make words do the work of war-ships. The doctrine which it was thus endeavored to establish had never been admitted into international law, has ever since been repudiated by universal consent of all nations, and is intrinsically preposterous. The British, however, designed to make it effective, and set to work in earnest to confiscate all vessels and cargoes captured on their way from any neutral nation to any port within the proscribed district. On November 21, next following, Napoleon retaliated by the Berlin decree, so called, declaring the entire British Isles to be under blockade, and forbidding any vessel which had been in any English port after publication of his decree to enter any port in the dominions under his control. In January, 1807, England made the next move by an order, likewise in contravention of international law, forbidding to neutrals all commerce between ports of the enemies of Great Britain. On November 11, 1807, the famous British Order in Council was issued, declaring neutral vessels and cargoes bound to any port or colony of any country

with which England was then at war, and which was closed to English ships, to be liable to capture and confiscation. A few days later, November 25, 1807, another Order established a rate of duties to be paid in England upon all neutral merchandise which should be permitted to be carried in neutral bottoms to countries at war with that power. December 17, 1807, Napoleon retorted by the Milan decree, which declared denationalized and subject to capture and condemnation every vessel, to whatsoever nation belonging, which should have submitted to search by an English ship, or should be on a voyage to England, or should have paid any tax to the English government. All these regulations, though purporting to be aimed at neutrals generally, in fact bore almost exclusively upon the United States, who alone were undertaking to conduct any neutral commerce worthy of mention. As Mr. Adams afterwards remarked, the effect of these illegal proclamations and unjustifiable novel doctrines "placed the commerce and shipping of the United States, with regard to all Europe and European colonies (Sweden alone excepted), in nearly the same state as it would have been, if, on that same 11th of November, England and France had both declared war against the United States." The merchants of this country might as well

have burned their ships as have submitted to these decrees.

All this while the impressment of American seamen by British ships of war was being vigorously prosecuted. This is one of those outrages so long ago laid away among the mouldering tombs in the historical graveyard that few persons now appreciate its enormity, or the extent to which it was carried. Those who will be at the pains to ascertain the truth in the matter will feel that the bloodiest, most costly, and most disastrous war would have been better than tame endurance of treatment so brutal and unjustifiable that it finds no parallel even in the long and dark list of wrongs which Great Britain has been wont to inflict upon all the weaker or the uncivilized peoples with whom she has been brought or has gratuitously forced herself into unwelcome contact. It was not an occasional act of high-handed arrogance that was done; there were not only a few unfortunate victims, of whom a large proportion might be of unascertained nationality. It was an organized system worked upon a very large scale. Every American seaman felt it necessary to have a certificate of citizenship, accompanied by a description of his features and of all the marks upon his person, as Mr. Adams said, "like the advertisement for a runaway negro slave." Nor was even this protection by any

means sure to be always efficient. The number of undoubted American citizens who were seized rose in a few years actually to many thousands. They were often taken without so much as a false pretence to right; but with the acknowledgment that they were Americans, they were seized upon the plea of a necessity for their services in the British ship. Some American vessels were left so denuded of seamen that they were lost at sea for want of hands to man them; the destruction of lives as well as property, unquestionably thus caused, was immense. When after the lapse of a long time and of infinite negotiation the American citizenship of some individual was clearly shown, still the chances of his return were small; some false and ignoble subterfuge was resorted to; he was not to be found; the name did not occur on the rolls of the navy; he had died, or been discharged, or had deserted, or had been shot. The more illegal the act committed by any British officer the more sure he was of reward, till it seemed that the impressment of American citizens was an even surer road to promotion than valor in an engagement with the enemy. Such were the substantial wrongs inflicted by Great Britain; nor were any pains taken to cloak their character; on the contrary, they were done with more than British insolence and offensiveness, and were

accompanied with insults which alone constituted sufficient provocation to war. To all this, for a long time, nothing but empty and utterly futile protests were opposed by this country. The affair of the Chesapeake, indeed, threatened for a brief moment to bring things to a crisis. That vessel, an American frigate, commanded by Commodore Barron, sailed on June 22, 1807, from Hampton Roads. The Leopard, a British fifty-gun ship, followed her, and before she was out of sight of land, hailed her and demanded the delivery of four men, of whom three at least were surely native Americans. Barron refused the demand, though his ship was wholly unprepared for action. Thereupon the Englishman opened his broadsides, killed three men and wounded sixteen, boarded the Chesapeake and took off the four sailors. They were carried to Halifax and tried by court-martial for desertion: one of them was hanged; one died in confinement, and five years elapsed before the other two were returned to the Chesapeake in Boston harbor. This wound was sufficiently deep to arouse a real spirit of resentment and revenge, and England went so far as to dispatch Mr. Rose to this country upon a pretended mission of peace, though the fraudulent character of his errand was sufficiently indicated by the fact that within a few hours after his departure the

first of the above named Orders in Council was issued but had not been communicated to him. As Mr. Adams indignantly said, "the same penful of ink which signed his instructions might have been used also to sign these illegal orders." Admiral Berkeley, the commander of the Leopard, received the punishment which he might justly have expected if precedent was to count for anything in the naval service of Great Britain, — he was promoted.

It is hardly worth while to endeavor to measure the comparative wrongfulness of the conduct of England and of France. The behavior of each was utterly unjustifiable; though England by committing the first extreme breach of international law gave to France the excuse of retaliation. There was, however, vast difference in the practical effect of the British and French decrees. The former wrought serious injury, falling little short of total destruction, to American shipping and commerce; the latter were only in a much less degree hurtful. The immense naval power of England and the channels in which our trade naturally flowed combined to make her destructive capacity as towards us very great. It was the outrages inflicted by her which brought the merchants of the United States face to face with ruin; they suffered not very greatly at the hands of Napoleon. Neither could the villainous process

of impressment be conducted by Frenchmen. France gave us cause for war, but England seemed resolved to drive us into it.

As British aggressions grew steadily and rapidly more intolerable, Mr. Adams found himself straining farther and farther away from those Federalist moorings at which, it must be confessed, he had long swung very precariously. The constituency which he represented was indeed in a quandary so embarrassing as hardly to be capable of maintaining any consistent policy. The New England of that day was a trading community, of which the industry and capital were almost exclusively centred in ship-owning and commerce. The merchants, almost to a man, had long been the most Anglican of Federalists in their political sympathies. Now they found themselves suffering utterly ruinous treatment at the hands of those whom they had loved overmuch. They were being ruthlessly destroyed by their friends, to whom they had been, so to speak, almost disloyally loyal. They saw their business annihilated, their property seized, and yet could not give utterance to resentment, or counsel resistance, without such a humiliating devouring of all their own principles and sentiments as they could by no possibility bring themselves to endure. There was but one road open to them, and that was the

ignoble one of casting themselves wholly into the arms of England, of rewarding her blows with caresses, of submitting to be fairly scourged into a servile alliance with her. It is not surprising that the independent temper of Mr. Adams revolted at the position which his party seemed not reluctant to assume at this juncture. Yet not very much better seemed for a time the policy of the administration. Jefferson was far from being a man for troubled seasons, which called for high spirit and executive energy. His flotillas of gunboats and like idle and silly fantasies only excited Mr. Adams's disgust. In fact, there was upon all sides a strong dread of a war with England, not always openly expressed, but now perfectly visible, arising with some from regard for that country, in others prompted by fear of her power. Alone among public men Mr. Adams, while earnestly hoping to escape war, was not willing to seek that escape by unlimited weakness and unbounded submission to lawless injury.

On November 17, 1807, Mr. Adams, who never in his life allowed fear to become a motive, wrote, with obvious contempt and indignation: "I observe among the members great embarrassment, alarm, anxiety, and confusion of mind, but no preparation for any measure of vigor, and an obvious strong disposition to

yield all that Great Britain may require, to preserve peace, under a thin external show of dignity and bravery." This tame and vacillating spirit roused his ire, and as it was chiefly manifested by his own party it alienated him from them farther than ever. Yet his wrath was so far held in reasonable check by his discretion that he would still have liked to avoid the perilous conclusion of arms, and though his impulse was to fight, yet he could not but recognize that the sensible course was to be content, for the time at least, with a manifestation of resentment, and the most vigorous acts short of war which the government could be induced to undertake. On this sentiment were based his introduction of the aforementioned resolutions, his willingness to support the administration, and his vote for the Non-importation Act in spite of a dislike for it as a very imperfectly satisfactory measure. But it was not alone his naturally independent temper which led him thus to feel so differently from other members of his party. In Europe he had had opportunities of forming a judgment more accurate than was possible for most Americans concerning the sentiments and policy of England towards this country. Not only had he been present at the negotiations resulting in the treaty of peace, but he had also afterwards been for several months engaged in

the personal discussion of commercial questions with the British minister of foreign affairs. From all that he had thus seen and heard he had reached the conviction, unquestionably correct, that the British were not only resolved to adopt a selfish course towards the United States, which might have been expected, but that they were consistently pursuing the further distinct design of crippling and destroying American commerce, to the utmost degree which their own extensive trade and great naval authority and power rendered possible. So long as he held this firm belief, it was inevitable that he should be at issue with the Federalists in all matters concerning our policy towards Great Britain. The ill-will naturally engendered in him by this conviction was increased to profound indignation when illiberal measures were succeeded by insults, by substantial wrongs in direct contravention of law, and by acts properly to be described as of real hostility. For Mr. Adams was by nature not only independent, but resentful and combative. When, soon after the attack of the Leopard upon the Chesapeake, he heard the transaction "openly justified at noonday," by a prominent Federalist,[1] "in a public insurance office upon the exchange at Boston," his temper rose. "This," he afterward wrote,

[1] Mr. John Lowell.

"this was the cause . . . which alienated me from that day and forever from the councils of the Federal party." When the news of that outrage reached Boston, Mr. Adams was there, and desired that the leading Federalists in the city should at once "take the lead in promoting a strong and clear expression of the sentiments of the people, and in an open and free-hearted manner, setting aside all party feelings, declare their determination at that crisis to support the government of their country." But unfortunately these gentlemen were by no means prepared for any such action, and foolishly left it for the friends of the administration to give the first utterance to a feeling which it is hard to excuse any American for not entertaining beneath such provocation. It was the Jeffersonians, accordingly, who convened "an informal meeting of the citizens of Boston and the neighboring towns," at which Mr. Adams was present, and by which he was put upon a committee to draw and report resolutions. These resolutions pledged a cheerful coöperation "in any measures, however serious," which the government might deem necessary and a support of the same with "lives and fortunes." The Federalists, learning too late that their backwardness at this crisis was a blunder, caused a town meeting to be called at Faneuil

Hall a few days later. This also Mr. Adams attended, and again was put on the committee to draft resolutions, which were only a little less strong than those of the earlier assemblage. But though many of the Federalists thus tardily and reluctantly fell in with the popular sentiment, they were for the most part heartily incensed against Mr. Adams. They threatened him that he should "have his head taken off for apostasy," and gave him to understand that he "should no longer be considered as having any communion with the party." If he had not already quite left them, they now turned him out from their community. But such abusive treatment was ill adapted to influence a man of his temper. Martyrdom, which in time he came to relish, had not now any terrors for him; and he would have lost as many heads as ever grew on Hydra, ere he would have yielded on a point of principle.

His spirit was soon to be demonstrated. Congress was convened in extra session on October 26, 1807. The administration brought forward the bill establishing an embargo. The measure may now be pronounced a blunder, and its proposal created a howl of rage and anguish from the commercial states, who saw in it only their utter ruin. Already a strong sectional feeling had been developed between

the planters of the South and the merchants of the North and East, and the latter now united in the cry that their quarter was to be ruined by the ignorant policy of this Virginian President. Terrible then was their wrath, when they actually saw a Massachusetts Senator boldly give his vote for what they deemed the most odious and wicked bill which had ever been presented in the halls of Congress. Nay, more, they learned with horror that Mr. Adams had even been a member of the committee which reported the bill, and that he had joined in the report. Henceforth the Federal party was to be like a hive of enraged hornets about the devoted renegade. No abuse which they could heap upon him seemed nearly adequate to the occasion. They despised him; they loathed him; they said and believed that he was false, selfish, designing, a traitor, an apostate, that he had run away from a failing cause, that he had sold himself. The language of contumely was exhausted in vain efforts to describe his baseness. Not even yet has the echo of the hard names which he was called quite died away in the land; and there are still families in New England with whom his dishonest tergiversation remains a traditional belief.

Never was any man more unjustly aspersed. It is impossible to view all the evidence dis-

passionately without not only acquitting Mr. Adams but greatly admiring his courage, his constancy, his independence. Whether the embargo was a wise and efficient or a futile and useless measure has little to do with the question of his conduct. The emergency called for strong action. The Federalists suggested only a temporizing submission, or that we should avert the terrible wrath of England by crawling beneath her lashes into political and commercial servitude. Mr. Jefferson thought the embargo would do, that it would aid him in his negotiations with England sufficiently to enable him to bring her to terms; he had before thought the same of the Non-importation Act. Mr. Adams felt, properly enough, concerning both these schemes, that they were insufficient and in many respects objectionable; but that to give the administration hearty support in the most vigorous measures which it was willing to undertake, was better than to aid an opposition utterly nerveless and servile and altogether devoid of so much as the desire for efficient action. It was no time to stay with the party of weakness; it was right to strengthen rather than to hamper a man so pacific and spiritless as Mr. Jefferson; to show a readiness to forward even his imperfect expedients; to display a united and indignant, if not quite a hostile

front to Great Britain, rather than to exhibit a tame and friendly feeling towards her. It was for these reasons, which had already controlled his action concerning the non-importation bill, that Mr. Adams joined in reporting the embargo bill and voted for it. He never pretended that he himself had any especial fancy for either of these measures, or that he regarded them as the best that could be devised under the circumstances. On the contrary, he hoped that the passage of the embargo would allow of the repeal of its predecessor. That he expected some good from it, and that it did some little good, cannot be denied. It did save a great deal of American property, both shipping and merchandise, from seizure and condemnation; and if it cut off the income it at least saved much of the principal of our merchants. If only the bill had been promptly repealed so soon as this protective purpose had been achieved, without awaiting further and altogether impossible benefits to accrue from it as an offensive measure, it might perhaps have left a better memory behind it. Unfortunately no one can deny that it was continued much too long. Mr. Adams saw this error and dreaded the consequences. After he had left Congress and had gone back to private life, he exerted all the influence which he had with the Republican members of Congress

to secure its repeal and the substitution of the Non-intercourse Act, an exchange which was in time accomplished, though much too tardily. Nay, much more than this, Mr. Adams stands forth almost alone as the advocate of threatening if not of actually belligerent measures. He expressed his belief that "our internal resources [were] competent to the establishment and maintenance of a naval force, public and private, if not fully adequate to the protection and defence of our commerce, at least sufficient to induce a retreat from hostilities, and to deter from a renewal of them by either of the warring parties;" and he insisted that "a system to that effect might be formed, ultimately far more economical, and certainly more energetic," than the embargo. But his "resolution met no encouragement." He found that it was the embargo or nothing, and he thought the embargo was a little better than nothing, as probably it was.

All the arguments which Mr. Adams advanced were far from satisfying his constituents in those days of wild political excitement, and they quickly found the means of intimating their unappeasable displeasure in a way certainly not open to misapprehension. Mr. Adams's term of service in the Senate was to expire on March 3, 1809. On June 2 and 3, 1808, anticipating by

many months the customary time for filling the coming vacancy, the legislature of Massachusetts proceeded to choose James Lloyd, junior, his successor. The votes were, in the Senate 21 for Mr. Lloyd, 17 for Mr. Adams; in the House 248 for Mr. Lloyd, and 213 for Mr. Adams. A more insulting method of administering a rebuke could not have been devised. At the same time, in further expression of disapprobation, resolutions strongly condemnatory of the embargo were passed. Mr. Adams was not the man to stay where he was not wanted, and on June 8 he sent in his letter of resignation. On the next day Mr. Lloyd was chosen to serve for the balance of his term.

Thus John Quincy Adams changed sides. The son of John Adams lost the senatorship for persistently supporting the administration of Thomas Jefferson. It was indeed a singular spectacle! In 1803 he had been sent to the Senate of the United States by Federalists as a Federalist; in 1808 he had abjured them and they had repudiated him; in 1809, as we are soon to see, he received a foreign appointment from the Republican President Madison, and was confirmed by a Republican Senate. Many of Mr. Adams's acts, many of his traits, have been harshly criticised, but for no act that he ever did or ever was charged with doing has

he been so harshly assailed as for this journey from one camp to the other. The gentlemen of wealth, position, and influence in Eastern Massachusetts, almost to a man, turned against him with virulence; many of their descendants still cherish the ancestral prejudice; and it may yet be a long while before the last mutterings of this deep-rooted antipathy die away. But that they will die away in time cannot be doubted. Praise will succeed to blame. Truth must prevail in a case where such abundant evidence is accessible; and the truth is that Mr. Adams's conduct was not ignoble, mean, and traitorous, but honorable, courageous, and disinterested. Those who singled him out for assault, though deaf to his arguments, might even then have reflected that within a few years a large proportion of the whole nation had changed in their opinions as he had now at last changed in his, so that the party which under Washington hardly had an existence and under John Adams was not, until the last moment, seriously feared, now showed an enormous majority throughout the whole country. Even in Massachusetts, the intrenched camp of the Federalists, one half of the population were now Republicans. But that change of political sentiment which in the individual voter is often admired as evidence of independent thought is

stigmatized in those more prominent in politics as tergiversation and apostasy.

It may be admitted that there are sound reasons for holding party leaders to a more rigid allegiance to party policy than is expected of the rank and file; yet certainly, at those periods when substantially new measures and new doctrines come to the front, the old party names lose whatever sacredness may at other times be in them, and the political fellowships of the past may properly be reformed. Novel problems cannot always find old comrades still united in opinions. Precisely such was the case with John Quincy Adams and the Federalists. The earlier Federalist creed related to one set of issues, the later Federalist creed to quite another set; the earlier creed was sound and deserving of support; the later creed was not so. It is easy to see, as one looks backward upon history, that every great and successful party has its mission, that it wins its success through the substantial righteousness of that mission, and that it owes its downfall to assuming an erroneous attitude towards some subsequent matter which becomes in turn of predominating importance. Sometimes, though rarely, a party remains on the right side through two or even more successive issues of profound consequence to the nation. The Federalist mis-

sion was to establish the Constitution of the United States as a vigorous, efficient, and practical system of government, to prove its soundness, safety, and efficacy, and to defend it from the undermining assaults of those who distrusted it and would have reduced it to imbecility. Supplementary and cognate to this was the further task of giving the young nation and the new system a chance to get fairly started in life before being subjected to the strain of war and European entanglements. To this end it was necessary to hold in check the Jeffersonian or French party, who sought to embroil us in a foreign quarrel. These two functions of the Federalist party were quite in accord; they involved the organizing and domestic instinct against the disorganizing and meddlesome; the strengthening against the enfeebling process; practical thinking against fanciful theories. Fortunately the able men had been generally of the sound persuasion, and by powerful exertions had carried the day and accomplished their allotted tasks so thoroughly that all subsequent generations of Americans have been reaping the benefit of their labors. But by the time that John Adams had concluded his administration the great Federalist work had been sufficiently done. Those who still believe that there is an overruling Providence in the affairs of men and na-

tions may well point to the history of this period in support of their theory. Republicanism was not able to triumph till Federalism had fulfilled all its proper duty and was on the point of going wrong.

During this earlier period John Quincy Adams had been a Federalist by conviction as well as by education. Nor was there any obvious reason for him to change his political faith with the change of party success, brought about as that was before its necessity was apparent but by the sure and inscrutable wisdom so marvellously enclosed in the great popular instinct. It was not patent, when Mr. Jefferson succeeded Mr. Adams, that Federalism was soon to become an unsound political creed — unsound, not because it had been defeated, but because it had done its work, and in the new emergency was destined to blunder. During Mr. Jefferson's first administration no questions of novel import arose. But they were not far distant, and soon were presented by the British aggressions. A grave crisis was created by this system of organized destruction of property and wholesale stealing of citizens, now suddenly practised with such terrible energy. What was to be done? What had the two great parties to advise concerning the policy of the country in this hour of peril? Unfortunately for the Federalists old

predilections were allowed now to govern their present action. Excusably Anglican in the bygone days of Genet's mission, they now remained still Anglican, when to be Anglican was to be emphatically un-American. As one reads the history of 1807 and 1808 it is impossible not to feel almost a sense of personal gratitude to John Quincy Adams that he dared to step out from his meek-spirited party and do all that circumstances rendered possible to promote resistance to insults and wrongs intolerable. In truth, he was always a man of high temper, and eminently a patriotic citizen of the United States. Unlike too many even of the best among his countrymen in those early years of the Republic, he had no foreign sympathies whatsoever; he was neither French nor English, but wholly, exclusively, and warmly American. He had no second love; the United States filled his public heart and monopolized his political affections. When he was abroad he established neither affiliations nor antipathies, and when he was at home he drifted with no party whose course was governed by foreign magnets. It needs only that this characteristic should be fully understood in order that his conduct in 1808 should be not alone vindicated but greatly admired.

At that time it was said, and it has been since

repeated, that he was allured by the loaves and fishes which the Republicans could distribute, while the Federalists could cast to him only meagre and uncertain crusts. Circumstances gave to the accusation such a superficial plausibility that it was believed by many honest men under the influence of political prejudice. But such a charge, alleged concerning a single act in a long public career, is to be scanned with suspicion. Disproof by demonstration is impossible ; but it is fair to seek for the character of the act in a study of the character of the actor, as illustrated by the rest of his career. Thus seeking we shall see that, if any traits can be surely predicated of any man, independence, courage, and honesty may be predicated of Mr. Adams. His long public life had many periods of trial, yet this is the sole occasion when it is so much as possible seriously to question the purity of his motives — for the story of his intrigue with Mr. Clay to secure the Presidency was never really believed by any one except General Jackson, and the beliefs of General Jackson are of little consequence. From the earliest to the latest day of his public life, he was never a party man. He is entitled to the justification to be derived from this life-long habit, when, in 1807–8, he voted against the wishes of those who had hoped to hold him in

the bonds of partisan alliance. In point of fact, so far from these acts being a yielding to selfish and calculating temptation, they called for great courage and strength of mind; instead of being tergiversation, they were a triumph in a severe ordeal. Mr. Adams was not so dull as to underrate, nor so void of good feeling as to be careless of, the storm of obloquy which he had to encounter, not only in such shape as is customary in like instances of a change of sides in politics, but, in his present case, of a peculiarly painful kind. He was to seem unfaithful, not only to a party, but to the bitter feud of a father whom he dearly loved and greatly respected; he was to be reviled by the neighbors and friends who constituted his natural social circle in Boston; he was to alienate himself from the rich, the cultivated, the influential gentlemen of his neighborhood, his comrades, who would almost universally condemn his conduct. He was to lose his position as Senator, and probably to destroy all hopes of further political success so far as it depended upon the good will of the people of his own State. In this he was at least giving up a certainty in exchange for what even his enemies must admit to have been only an expectation.

But in fact it is now evident that there was not upon his part even an expectation. At the

first signs of the views which he was likely to hold, that contemptible but influential Republican, Giles, of Virginia, also one or two others of the same party, sought to approach him with insinuating suggestions. But Mr. Adams met these advances in a manner frigid and repellent even beyond his wont, and far from seeking to conciliate these emissaries, and to make a bargain, or even establish a tacit understanding for his own benefit, he held them far aloof, and simply stated that he wished and expected nothing from the administration. His mind was made up, his opinion was formed; no bribe was needed to secure his vote. Not thus do men sell themselves in politics. The Republicans were fairly notified that he was going to do just as he chose; and Mr. Jefferson, the arch-enemy of all Adamses, had no occasion to forego his feud to win this recruit from that family.

Mr. Adams's Diary shows unmistakably that he was acting rigidly upon principle, that he believed himself to be injuring or even destroying his political prospects, and that in so doing he taxed his moral courage severely. The whole tone of the Diary, apart from those few distinct statements which hostile critics might view with distrust, is despondent, often bitter, but defiant and stubborn. If in later life he ever anticipated the possible publication of these

private pages, yet he could hardly have done so at this early day. Among certain general reflections at the close of the year 1808, he writes: "On most of the great national questions now under discussion, my sense of duty leads me to support the Administration, and I find myself, of course, in opposition to the Federalists in general. But I have no communication with the President, other than that in the regular order of business in the Senate. In this state of things my situation calls in a peculiar manner for prudence; my political prospects are declining, and, as my term of service draws near its close, I am constantly approaching to the certainty of being restored to the situation of a private citizen. For this event, however, I hope to have my mind sufficiently prepared."

In July, 1808, the Republicans of the Congressional District wished to send him to the House of Representatives, but to the gentleman who waited upon him with this proposal he returned a decided negative. Other considerations apart, he would not interfere with the reëlection of his friend, Mr. Quincy.

Certain remarks, written when his senatorial term was far advanced, when he had lost the confidence of the Federalists without obtaining that of the Republicans, may be of interest at this point. He wrote, October 30, 1807: "I

employed the whole evening in looking over the Journal of the Senate, since I have been one of its members. Of the very little business which I have commenced during the four sessions, at least three fourths has failed, with circumstances of peculiar mortification. The very few instances in which I have succeeded, have been always after an opposition of great obstinacy, often ludicrously contrasting with the insignificance of the object in pursuit. More than one instance has occurred where the same thing which I have assiduously labored in vain to effect has been afterwards accomplished by others, without the least resistance; more than once, where the pleasure of disappointing me has seemed to be the prominent principle of decision. Of the preparatory business, matured in committees, I have had a share, gradually increasing through the four sessions, but always as a subordinate member. The merely laborious duties have been readily assigned to me, and as readily undertaken and discharged. My success has been more frequent in opposition than in carrying any proposition of my own, and I hope I have been instrumental in arresting many unadvised purposes and projects. Though as to the general policy of the country I have been uniformly in a small, and constantly deceasing minority; my opinions and votes have

been much oftener in unison with the Administration than with their opponents; I have met with at least as much opposition from my party friends as from their adversaries, — I believe more. I know not that I have made any personal enemies now in Senate, nor can I flatter myself with having acquired any personal friends. There have been hitherto two, Mr. Tracey and Mr. Plumer, upon whom I could rely, but it has pleased Providence to remove one by death, and the changes of political party have removed the other." This is a striking paragraph, certainly not written by a man in a very cheerful or sanguine frame of mind, not by one who congratulates himself on having skilfully taken the initial steps in a brilliant political career; but, it is fair to say, by one who has at least tried to do his duty, and who has not knowingly permitted himself to be warped either by passion, prejudice, party alliances, or selfish considerations.

As early as November, 1805, Mr. Adams, being still what may be described as an independent Federalist, was approached by Dr. Rush with tentative suggestions concerning a foreign mission. Mr. Madison, then Secretary of State, and even President Jefferson were apparently not disinclined to give him such employment, provided he would be willing to accept

it at their hands. Mr. Adams simply replied, that he would not refuse a nomination merely because it came from Mr. Jefferson, though there was no office in the President's gift for which he had any wish. Perhaps because of the unconciliatory coolness of this response, or perhaps for some better reason, the nomination did not follow at that time. No sooner, however, had Mr. Madison fairly taken the oath of office as President than he bethought him of Mr. Adams, now no longer a Federalist, but, concerning the present issues, of the Republican persuasion. On March 6, 1809, Mr. Adams was notified by the President personally of the intention to nominate him as Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia. It was a new mission, the first minister ever nominated to Russia having been only a short time before rejected by the Senate. But the Emperor had often expressed his wish to exchange ministers, and Mr. Madison was anxious to comply with the courteous request. Mr. Adams's name was accordingly at once sent to the Senate. But on the following day, March 7, that body resolved that "it is inexpedient at this time to appoint a minister from the United States to the Court of Russia." The vote was seventeen to fifteen, and among the seventeen was Mr. Adams's old colleague, Timothy Pickering, who probably never in his

life cast a vote which gave him so much pleasure. Mr. Madison, however, did not readily desist from his purpose, and a few months later, June 26, he sent a message to the Senate, stating that the considerations previously leading him to nominate a minister to Russia had since been strengthened, and again naming Mr. Adams for the post. This time the nomination was confirmed with readiness, by a vote of nineteen to seven, Mr. Pickering, of course, being one of the still hostile minority.

At noon on August 5, 1809, records Mr. Adams, "I left my house at the corner of Boylston and Nassau streets, in Boston," again to make the tedious and uncomfortable voyage across the Atlantic. A miserable and a dangerous time he had of it ere, on October 23, he reached St. Petersburg. Concerning the four years and a half which he is now to spend in Russia very little need be said. His active duties were of the simplest character, amounting to little more than rendering occasional assistance to American shipmasters suffering beneath the severities so often illegally inflicted by the contesting powers of Europe. But apart from the slender practical service to be done, the period must have been interesting and agreeable for him personally, for he was received and treated throughout his stay by the Emperor

and his courtiers with distinguished kindness. The Emperor, who often met him walking, used to stop and chat with him, while Count Romanzoff, the minister of foreign affairs, was cordial beyond the ordinary civility of diplomacy. The Diary records a series of court presentations, balls, fêtes, dinners, diplomatic and other, launches, displays of fireworks, birthday festivities, parades, baptisms, plays, state funerals, illuminations, and Te Deums for victories: in short, every species of social gayety and public pageant. At all these Mr. Adams was always a bidden and apparently a welcome guest. It must be admitted, even by his detractors, that he was an admirable representative of the United States abroad. Having already seen much of the distinguished society of European courts, but retaining a republican simplicity, which was wholly genuine and a natural part of his character and therefore was never affected or offensive in its manifestations, he really represented the best element in the politics and society of the United States. Winning respect for himself he won it also for the country which he represented. Thus he was able to render an indirect but essential service in cementing the kindly feeling which the Russian Empire entertained for the American Republic. Russia could then do us little

good and almost no harm, yet the friendship of a great European power had a certain moral value in those days of our national infancy. That friendship, so cordially offered, Mr. Adams was fortunately well fitted to conciliate, showing in his foreign callings a tact which did not mark him in other public relations. He was perhaps less liked by his travelling fellow countrymen than by the Russians. The paltry ambition of a certain class of Americans for introduction to high society disgusted him greatly, and he was not found an efficient ally by these would-be comrades of the Russian aristocracy. "The ambition of young Americans to crowd themselves upon European courts and into the company of nobility is a very ridiculous and not a very proud feature of their character," he wrote; "there is nothing, in my estimate of things, meaner than courting society where, if admitted, it is only to be despised." He himself happily combined extensive acquirements, excellent ability, diplomatic and courtly experience, and natural independence of character without ill-bred self-assertion, and never failed to create a good impression in the many circles into which his foreign career introduced him.

The ambassadors and ministers from European powers at St. Petersburg were constantly wrangling about precedence and like petty mat-

ters of court etiquette. "In all these controversies," writes Mr. Adams, "I have endeavored to consider it as an affair in which I, as an *American* minister, had no concern; and that my only principle is to dispute upon precedence with nobody." A good-natured contempt for European follies may be read between the lines of this remark; wherein it may be said that the Monroe Doctrine is applied to court etiquette.

He always made it a point to live within the meagre income which the United States allowed him, but seems to have suffered no diminution of consideration for this reason. One morning, walking on the Fontanka, he met the Emperor, who said: "Mons. Adams, il y a cent ans que je ne vous ai vu;" and then continuing the conversation, "asked me whether I intended to take a house in the country this summer. I said, No. . . . 'And why so?' said he. I was hesitating upon an answer when he relieved me from embarrassment by saying, 'Peutêtre sont-ce des considerations de finance?' As he said it with perfect good humor and with a smile, I replied in the same manner: 'Mais Sire, elles y sont pour une bonne part.'"[1]

The volume of the journal which records this residence in St. Petersburg is very interesting as a picture of Russian life and manners in

[1] An interesting sketch of his household and its expenses is to be found in ii. Diary, 193.

high society. Few travellers write anything nearly so vivid, so thorough, or so trustworthy as these entries. Moreover, during the whole period of his stay the great wars of Napoleon were constantly increasing the astonishment of mankind, and created intense excitement at the Court of Russia. These feelings waxed stronger as it grew daily more likely that the Emperor would have to take his turn also as a party defendant in the great conflict. Then at last came the fact of war, the invasion of Russia, the burning of Moscow, the disastrous retreat of the invaders ending in ignominious flight, the advance of the allies, finally the capture of Paris. All this while Mr. Adams at St. Petersburg witnessed first the alarm and then the exultation of the court and the people as the rumors now of defeat, anon of victory, were brought by the couriers at tantalizing intervals; and he saw the rejoicings and illuminations which rendered the Russian capital so brilliant and glorious during the last portion of his residence. It was an experience well worth having, and which is pleasantly depicted in the Diary.

In September, 1812, Count Romanzoff suggested to Mr. Adams the readiness of the Emperor to act as mediator in bringing about peace between the United States and England. The suggestion was promptly acted upon, but with

no directly fortunate results. The American government acceded at once to the proposition, and at the risk of an impolitic display of readiness dispatched Messrs. Gallatin and Bayard to act as Commissioners jointly with Mr. Adams in the negotiations. These gentlemen, however, arrived in St. Petersburg only to find themselves in a very awkward position. Their official character might not properly be considered as attaching unless England should accept the offer of mediation. But England had refused, in the first instance, to do this, and she now again reiterated her refusal without regard for the manifestation of willingness on the part of the United States. Further, Mr. Gallatin's nomination was rejected by the Senate after his departure, on the ground that his retention of the post of Secretary of the Treasury was incompatible, under the Constitution, with this diplomatic function. So the United States appeared in a very annoying attitude, her Commissioners were uncomfortable and somewhat humiliated; Russia felt a certain measure of vexation at the brusque and positive rejection of her friendly proposition on the part of Great Britain; and that country alone came out of the affair with any self-satisfaction.

But by the time when all hopes of peace through the friendly offices of Russia were at

an end, that stage of the conflict had been reached at which both parties were quite ready to desist. The United States, though triumphing in some brilliant naval victories, had been having a sorry experience on land, where, as the Russian minister remarked, "England did as she pleased." A large portion of the people were extremely dissatisfied, and it was impossible to ignore that the outlook did not promise better fortunes in the future than had been encountered in the past. On the other hand, England had nothing substantial to expect from a continuance of the struggle, except heavy additional expenditure which it was not then the fashion to compel the worsted party to recoup. She accordingly intimated her readiness to send Commissioners to Göttingen, for which place Ghent was afterwards substituted, to meet American Commissioners and settle terms of pacification. The United States renewed the powers of Messrs. Adams, Bayard, and Gallatin, a new Secretary of the Treasury having in the meantime been appointed, and added Jonathan Russell, then Minister to Sweden, and Henry Clay. England deputed Lord Gambier, an admiral, Dr. Adams, a publicist, and Mr. Goulburn, a member of Parliament and Under Secretary of State. These eight gentlemen accordingly met in Ghent on August 7, 1814.

It was upwards of four months before an agreement was reached. During this period Mr. Adams kept his Diary with much more even than his wonted faithfulness, and it undoubtedly presents the most vivid picture in existence of the labors of treaty-making diplomatists. The eight were certainly an odd assemblage of peace-makers. The ill-blood and wranglings between the opposing Commissions were bad enough, yet hardly equalled the intestine dissensions between the American Commissioners themselves. That the spirit of peace should ever have emanated from such an universal embroilment is almost sufficiently surprising to be regarded as a miracle. At the very beginning, or even before fairly beginning, the British party roused the jealous ire of the Americans by proposing that they all should meet, for exchanging their full powers, at the lodgings of the Englishmen. The Americans took fire at this "offensive pretension to superiority" which was "the usage from Ambassadors to Ministers of an inferior order." Mr. Adams cited Martens, and Mr. Bayard read a case from Ward's "Law of Nations." Mr. Adams suggested sending a pointed reply, agreeing to meet the British Commissioners "at any place other than their own lodgings;" but Mr. Gallatin, whose valuable function was destined to be the keeping of the peace among his frac-

tious colleagues, as well as betwixt them and the Englishmen, substituted the milder phrase, "at any place which may be mutually agreed upon." The first meeting accordingly took place at the Hôtel des Pays Bas, where it was arranged that the subsequent conferences should be held alternately at the quarters of the two Commissions. Then followed expressions, conventional and proper but wholly untrue, of mutual sentiments of esteem and good will.

No sooner did the gentlemen begin to get seriously at the work before them than the most discouraging prospects were developed. The British first presented their demands, as follows: 1. That the United States should conclude a peace with the Indian allies of Great Britain, and that a species of neutral belt of Indian territory should be established between the dominions of the United States and Great Britain, so that these dominions should be nowhere conterminous, upon which belt or barrier neither power should be permitted to encroach even by purchase, and the boundaries of which should be settled in this treaty. 2. That the United States should keep no naval force upon the Great Lakes, and should neither maintain their existing forts nor build new ones upon their northern frontier; it was even required that the boundary line should run along the

southern shore of the lakes; while no corresponding restriction was imposed upon Great Britain, because she was stated to have no projects of conquest as against her neighbor. 3. That a piece of the province of Maine should be ceded, in order to give the English a road from Halifax to Quebec. 4. That the stipulation of the treaty of 1783, conferring on English subjects the right of navigating the Mississippi, should be now formally renewed.

The Americans were astounded; it seemed to them hardly worth while to have come so far to listen to such propositions. Concerning the proposed Indian pacification they had not even any powers, the United States being already busied in negotiating a treaty with the tribes as independent powers. The establishment of the neutral Indian belt was manifestly contrary to the established policy and obvious destiny of the nation. Neither was the answer agreeable, which was returned by Dr. Adams to the inquiry as to what was to be done with those citizens of the United States who had already settled in those parts of Michigan, Illinois, and Ohio, included within the territory which it was now proposed to make inalienably Indian. He said that these people, amounting perhaps to one hundred thousand, "must shift for themselves." The one-sided disarmament upon the lakes and along

the frontier was, by the understanding of all nations, such an humiliation as is inflicted only on a crushed adversary. No return was offered for the road between Halifax and Quebec; nor for the right of navigating the Mississippi. The treaty of peace of 1783, made in ignorance of the topography of the unexplored northern country, had established an impossible boundary line running from the Lake of the Woods westward along the forty-ninth parallel to the Mississippi; and as appurtenant to the British territory, thus supposed to touch the river, a right of navigation upon it was given. It had since been discovered that a line on that parallel would never touch the Mississippi. The same treaty had also secured for the United States certain rights concerning the Northeastern fisheries. The English now insisted upon a re-affirmance of the privilege given to them, without a re-affirmance of the privilege given to the United States; ignoring the fact that the recent acquisition of Louisiana, making the Mississippi wholly American, materially altered the propriety of a British right of navigation upon it.

Apart from the intolerable character of these demands, the personal bearing of the English Commissioners did not tend to mitigate the chagrin of the Americans. The formal civilities had counted with the American Commis-

sioners for more than they were worth, and had induced them, in preparing a long dispatch to the home government, to insert "a paragraph complimentary to the personal deportment" of the British. But before they sent off the document they revised it and struck out these pleasant phrases. Not many days after the first conference Mr. Adams notes that the tone of the English Commissioners was even "more peremptory, and their language more overbearing, than at the former conferences." A little farther on he remarks that "the British note is overbearing and insulting in its tone, like the two former ones." Again he says: —

"The tone of all the British notes is arrogant, overbearing, and offensive. The tone of ours is neither so bold nor so spirited as I think it should be. It is too much on the defensive, and too excessive in the caution to say nothing irritating. I have seldom been able to prevail upon my colleagues to insert anything in the style of retort upon the harsh and reproachful matter which we receive."

Many little passages-at-arms in the conferences are recited which amply bear out these remarks as regards both parties. Perhaps, however, it should be admitted that the Americans made up for the self-restraint which they practised in conference by the disagreements and bickerings in which they indulged when

consulting among themselves. Mr. Gallatin's serene temper and cool head were hardly taxed to keep the peace among his excited colleagues. Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay were especially prone to suspicions and to outbursts of anger. Mr. Adams often and candidly admits as much of himself, apparently not without good reason. At first the onerous task of drafting the numerous documents which the Commission had to present devolved upon him, a labor for which he was well fitted in all respects save, perhaps, a tendency to prolixity. He did not, however, succeed in satisfying his comrades, and the criticisms to which they subjected his composition galled his self-esteem severely, so much so that erelong he altogether relinquished this function, which was thereafter performed chiefly by Mr. Gallatin. As early as August 21, Mr. Adams says, not without evident bitterness, that though they all were agreed on the general view of the subject, yet in his "exposition of it, one objects to the form, another to the substance, of almost every paragraph." Mr. Gallatin would strike out everything possibly offensive to the Englishmen; Mr. Clay would draw his pen through every figurative expression; Mr. Russell, not content with agreeing to all the objections of both the others, would further amend the construction of every sentence;

and finally Mr. Bayard would insist upon writing all over again in his own language. All this nettled Mr. Adams exceedingly. On September 24 he again writes that it was agreed to adopt an article which he had drawn, "though with objections to almost every word" which he had used. "This," he says, "is a severity with which I alone am treated in our discussions by all my colleagues. Almost everything written by any of the rest is rejected, or agreed to with very little criticism, verbal or substantial. But every line that I write passes a gauntlet of objections by every one of my colleagues, which finally issues, for the most part, in the rejection of it all." He reflects, with a somewhat forced air of self-discipline, that this must indicate some faultiness in his composition which he must try to correct; but in fact it is sufficiently evident that he was seldom persuaded that his papers were improved. Amid all this we see in the Diary many exhibitions of vexation. One day he acknowledges, "I cannot always restrain the irritability of my temper;" another day he informed his colleagues, "with too much warmth, that they might be assured I was as determined as they were;" again he reflects, "I, too, must not forget to keep a constant guard upon my temper, for the time is evidently approaching when it will be wanted." Mr. Gallatin alone

seems not to have exasperated him ; Mr. Clay and he were constantly in discussion, and often pretty hotly. Instead of coming nearer together, as time went on, these two fell farther apart. What Mr. Clay thought of Mr. Adams may probably be inferred from what we know that Mr. Adams thought of Mr. Clay. "Mr. Clay is losing his temper, and growing peevish and fractious," he writes on October 31 ; and constantly he repeats the like complaint. The truth is, that the precise New Englander and the impetuous Westerner were kept asunder not only by local interests but by habits and modes of thought utterly dissimilar. Some amusing glimpses of their private life illustrate this difference. Mr. Adams worked hard and diligently, allowing himself little leisure for pleasure ; but Mr. Clay, without actually neglecting his duties, yet managed to find ample time for enjoyment. More than once Mr. Adams notes that, as he rose about five o'clock in the morning to light his own fire and begin the labors of the day by candle-light, he heard the parties breaking up and leaving Mr. Clay's rooms across the entry, where they had been playing cards all night long. In these little touches one sees the distinctive characters of the men well portrayed.

The very extravagance of the British de-

mands at least saved the Americans from perplexity. Mr. Clay, indeed, cherished an "inconceivable idea" that the Englishmen would "finish by receding from the ground they had taken;" but meantime there could be no difference of opinion concerning the impossibility of meeting them upon that ground. Mr. Adams, never lacking in courage, actually wished to argue with them that it would be for the interests of Great Britain not less than of the United States if Canada should be ceded to the latter power. Unfortunately his colleagues would not support him in this audacious policy, the humor of which is delicious. It would have been infinitely droll to see how the British Commissioners would have hailed such a proposition, by way of appropriate termination of a conflict in which the forces of their nation had captured and ransacked the capital city of the Americans!

On August 21 the Englishmen invited the Americans to dinner on the following Saturday. "The chance is," wrote Mr. Adams, "that before that time the whole negotiation will be at an end." The banquet, however, did come off, and a few more succeeded it; feasts not marked by any great geniality or warmth, except perhaps occasionally warmth of discussion. So sure were the Americans that they were about to

break off the negotiations that Mr. Adams began to consider by what route he should return to St. Petersburg; and they declined to renew the tenure of their quarters for more than a few days longer. Like alarms were of frequent occurrence, even almost to the very day of agreement. On September 15, at a dinner given by the American Commissioners, Lord Gambier asked Mr. Adams whether he would return immediately to St. Petersburg. "Yes," replied Mr. Adams, "that is, if you send us away." His lordship "replied with assurances how deeply he lamented it, and with a hope that we should one day be friends again." On the same occasion Mr. Goulburn said that probably the last note of the Americans would "terminate the business," and that they "must fight it out." Fighting it out was a much less painful prospect for Great Britain just at that juncture than for the United States, as the Americans realized with profound anxiety. "We so fondly cling to the vain hope of peace, that every new proof of its impossibility operates upon us as a disappointment," wrote Mr. Adams. No amount of pride could altogether conceal the fact that the American Commissioners represented the worsted party, and though they never openly said so even among themselves, yet indirectly they were obliged to recognize the truth. On

November 10 we find Mr. Adams proposing to make concessions not permitted by their instructions, because, as he said: —

"I felt so sure that [the home government] would now gladly take the state before the war as the general basis of the peace, that I was prepared to take on me the responsibility of trespassing upon their instructions thus far. Not only so, but I would at this moment cheerfully give my life for a peace on this basis. If peace was possible, it would be on no other. I had indeed no hope that the proposal would be accepted."

Mr. Clay thought that the British would laugh at this: "They would say, Ay, ay! pretty fellows you, to think of getting out of the war as well as you got into it." This was not consoling for the representatives of that side which had declared war for the purpose of curing grievances and vindicating alleged rights. But that Mr. Adams correctly read the wishes of the government was proved within a very few days by the receipt of express authority from home "to conclude the peace on the basis of the *status ante bellum*." Three days afterwards, on November 27, three and a half months after the vexatious haggling had been begun, we encounter in the Diary the first real gleam of hope of a successful termination: "All the difficulties to the conclusion of a peace appear to be

now so nearly removed, that my colleagues all consider it as certain. I myself think it probable."

There were, however, some three weeks more of negotiation to be gone through before the consummation was actually achieved, and the ill blood seemed to increase as the end was approached. The differences between the American Commissioners waxed especially serious concerning the fisheries and the navigation of the Mississippi. Mr. Adams insisted that if the treaty of peace had been so far abrogated by the war as to render necessary a re-affirmance of the British right of navigating the Mississippi, then a re-affirmance of the American rights in the Northeastern fisheries was equally necessary. This the English Commissioners denied. Mr. Adams said it was only an exchange of privileges presumably equivalent. Mr. Clay, however, was firmly resolved to prevent all stipulations admitting such a right of navigation, and the better to do so he was quite willing to let the fisheries go. The navigation privilege he considered "much too important to be conceded for the mere liberty of drying fish upon a desert," as he was pleased to describe a right for which the United States has often been ready to go to war and may yet some time do so. "Mr. Clay lost his temper," writes Mr.

Adams a day or two later, "as he generally does whenever this right of the British to navigate the Mississippi is discussed. He was utterly averse to admitting it as an equivalent for a stipulation securing the contested part of the fisheries. He said the more he heard of this [the right of fishing], the more convinced he was that it was of little or no value. He should be glad to get it if he could, but he was sure the British would not ultimately grant it. That the navigation of the Mississippi, on the other hand, was an object of immense importance, and he could see no sort of reason for granting it as an equivalent for the fisheries." Thus spoke the representative of the West. The New Englander — the son of the man whose exertions had been chiefly instrumental in originally obtaining the grant of the Northeastern fishery privileges — naturally went to the other extreme. He thought "the British right of navigating the Mississippi to be as nothing, considered as a grant from us. It was secured to them by the peace of 1783, they had enjoyed it at the commencement of the war, it had never been injurious in the slightest degree to our own people, and it appeared to [him] that the British claim to it was just and equitable." Further he "believed the right to this navigation to be a very useless thing to the British. . . . But

their national pride and honor were interested in it; the government could not make a peace which would abandon it." The fisheries, however, Mr. Adams regarded as one of the most inestimable and inalienable of American rights. It is evident that the United States could ill have spared either Mr. Adams or Mr. Clay from the negotiation, and the joinder of the two, however fraught with discomfort to themselves, well served substantial American interests.

Mr. Adams thought the British perfidious, and suspected them of not entertaining any honest intention of concluding a peace. On December 12, after an exceedingly quarrelsome conference, he records his belief that the British have "insidiously kept open" two points, "for the sake of finally breaking off the negotiations and making all their other concessions proofs of their extreme moderation, to put upon us the blame of the rupture."

On December 11 we find Mr. Clay ready "for a war three years longer," and anxious "to begin to play at *brag*" with the Englishmen. His colleagues, more complaisant or having less confidence in their own skill in that game, found it difficult to placate him; he "stalked to and fro across the chamber, repeating five or six times, 'I will never sign a treaty upon the *status ante bellum* with the Indian

article. So help me God!'" The next day there was an angry controversy with the Englishmen. The British troops had taken and held Moose Island in Passamaquoddy Bay, the rightful ownership of which was in dispute. The title was to be settled by arbitrators. But the question, whether the British should restore possession of the island pending the arbitration, aroused bitter discussion. "Mr. Goulburn and Dr. Adams (the Englishman) immediately took fire, and Goulburn lost all control of his temper. He has always in such cases," says the Diary, "a sort of convulsive agitation about him, and the tone in which he speaks is more insulting than the language which he uses." Mr. Bayard referred to the case of the Falkland Islands. "'Why' (in a transport of rage), said Goulburn, 'in that case we sent a fleet and troops and drove the fellows off; and that is what we ought to have done in this case.'" Mr. J. Q. Adams, whose extensive and accurate information more than once annoyed his adversaries, stated that, as he remembered it, "the Spaniards in that case had driven the British off," — and Lord Gambier helped his blundering colleague out of the difficulty by suggesting a new subject, much as the defeated heroes of the Iliad used to find happy refuge from death in a god-sent cloud of dust. It is amusing to read

that in the midst of such scenes as these the show of courtesy was still maintained; and on December 13 the Americans "all dined with the British Plenipotentiaries," though "the party was more than usually dull, stiff, and reserved." It was certainly forcing the spirit of good fellowship. The next day Mr. Clay notified his colleagues that they were going "to make a damned bad treaty, and he did not know whether he would sign it or not;" and Mr. Adams also said that he saw that the rest had made up their minds "at last to yield the fishery point," in which case he also could not sign the treaty. On the following day, however, the Americans were surprised by receiving a note from the British Commissioners, wherein they made the substantial concession of omitting from the treaty all reference to the fisheries and the navigation of the Mississippi. But Mr. Clay, on reading the note, "manifested some chagrin," and "still talked of breaking off the negotiation," even asking Mr. Adams to join him in so doing, which request, however, Mr. Adams very reasonably refused. Mr. Clay had also been anxious to stand out for a distinct abandonment of the alleged right of impressment; but upon this point he found none of his colleagues ready to back him, and he was compelled perforce to yield. Agreement was there-

fore now substantially reached; a few minor matters were settled, and on December 24, 1814, the treaty was signed by all the eight negotiators.

It was an astonishing as well as a happy result. Never, probably, in the history of diplomacy has concord been produced from such discordant elements as had been brought together in Ghent. Dissension seemed to have become the mother of amity; and antipathies were mere preliminaries to a good understanding; in diplomacy as in marriage it had worked well to begin with a little aversion. But, in truth, this consummation was largely due to what had been going on in the English Cabinet. At the outset Lord Castlereagh had been very unwilling to conclude peace, and his disposition had found expression in the original intolerable terms prepared by the British Commissioners. But Lord Liverpool had been equally solicitous on the other side, and was said even to have tendered his resignation to the Prince Regent, if an accommodation should not be effected. His endeavors were fortunately aided by events in Europe. Pending the negotiations Lord Castlereagh went on a diplomatic errand to Vienna, and there fell into such threatening discussions with the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, that he thought it

prudent to have done with the American war, and wrote home pacific advices. Hence, at last, came such concessions as satisfied the Americans.

The treaty established "a firm and universal peace between his Britannic Majesty and the United States." Each party was to restore all captured territory, except that the islands of which the title was in dispute were to remain in the occupation of the party holding them at the time of ratification until that title should be settled by commissioners; provision was made also for the determination of all the open questions of boundary by sundry boards of commissioners; each party was to make peace with the Indian allies of the other. Such were, in substance, the only points touched upon by this document. Of the many subjects mooted between the negotiators scarcely any had survived the fierce contests which had been waged concerning them. The whole matter of the navigation of the Mississippi, access to that river, and a road through American territory, had been dropped by the British; while the Americans had been well content to say nothing of the Northeastern fisheries, which they regarded as still their own. The disarmament on the lakes and along the Canadian border, and the neutralization of a strip of Indian

territory, were yielded by the English. The Americans were content to have nothing said about impressment; nor was any one of the many illegal rights exercised by England formally abandoned. The Americans satisfied themselves with the reflection that circumstances had rendered these points now only matters of abstract principle, since the pacification of Europe had removed all opportunities and temptations for England to persist in her previous objectionable courses. For the future it was hardly to be feared that she would again undertake to pursue a policy against which it was evident that the United States were willing to conduct a serious war. There was, however, no provision for indemnification.

Upon a fair consideration, it must be admitted that though the treaty was silent upon all the points which the United States had made war for the purpose of enforcing, yet the country had every reason to be gratified with the result of the negotiation. The five Commissioners had done themselves ample credit. They had succeeded in agreeing with each other; they had avoided any fracture of a negotiation which, up to the very end, seemed almost daily on the verge of being broken off in anger; they had managed really to lose nothing, in spite of the fact that their side had

had decidedly the worst of the struggle. They had negotiated much more successfully than the armies of their countrymen had fought. The Marquis of Wellesley said, in the House of Lords, that "in his opinion the American Commissioners had shown a most astonishing superiority over the British during the whole of the correspondence." One cannot help wishing that the battle of New Orleans had taken place a little earlier, or that the negotiation had fallen a little later, so that news of that brilliant event could have reached the ears of the insolent Englishmen at Ghent, who had for three months been enjoying the malicious pleasure of lending to the Americans English newspapers containing accounts of American misfortunes. But that fortunate battle was not fought until a few days after the eight Commissioners had signed their compact. It is an interesting illustration of the slowness of communication which our forefathers had to endure, that the treaty crossed the Atlantic in a sailing ship in time to travel through much of the country simultaneously with the report of this farewell victory. Two such good pieces of news coming together set the people wild with delight. Even on the dry pages of Niles's "Weekly Register" occurs the triumphant paragraph: "Who would not be an American?

Long live the Republic! All hail! last asylum of oppressed humanity! Peace is signed in the arms of victory!" It was natural that most of the ecstasy should be manifested concerning the military triumph, and that the mass of the people should find more pleasure in glorifying General Jackson than in exalting the Commissioners. The value of their work, however, was well proved by the voice of Great Britain. In the London "Times" of December 30 appeared a most angry tirade against the treaty, with bitter sneers at those who called the peace an "honorable" one. England, it was said, "had attempted to force her principles on America, and had failed." Foreign powers would say that the English "had retired from the combat with the stripes yet bleeding on their backs, — with the recent defeats at Plattsburgh and on Lake Champlain unavenged." The most gloomy prognostications of further wars with America when her naval power should have waxed much greater were indulged. The loss of prestige in Europe, "the probable loss of our trans-Atlantic provinces," were among the results to be anticipated from this treaty into which the English Commissioners had been beguiled by the Americans. These latter were reviled with an abuse which was really the highest compliment. The family name of Mr.

Adams gained no small access of distinction in England from this business.

After the conclusion of the treaty Mr. Adams went to Paris, and remained there until the middle of May, 1815, thus having the good fortune to witness the return of Napoleon and a great part of the events of the famous "hundred days." On May 26 he arrived in London, where there awaited him, in the hands of the Barings, his commission as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Great Britain. His first duty was, in connection with Mr. Clay and Mr. Gallatin, to negotiate a treaty of commerce, in which business he again met the same three British Commissioners by whom the negotiations at Ghent had been conducted, of whose abilities the government appeared to entertain a better opinion than the Marquis of Wellesley had expressed. This negotiation had been brought so far towards conclusion by his colleagues before his own arrival that Mr. Adams had little to do in assisting them to complete it. This little having been done, they departed and left him as Minister at the Court of St. James. Thus he fulfilled Washington's prophecy, by reaching the highest rank in the American diplomatic service.

Of his stay in Great Britain little need be said. He had few duties of importance to per-

form. The fisheries, the right of impressment, and the taking away and selling of slaves by British naval officers during the late war, formed the subjects of many interviews between him and Lord Castlereagh, without, however, any definite results being reached. But he succeeded in obtaining, towards the close of his stay, some slight remission of the severe restrictions placed by England upon our trade with her West Indian colonies. His relations with a cabinet in which the principles of Castlereagh and Canning predominated could hardly be cordial, yet he seems to have been treated with perfect civility. Indeed, he was not a man whom it was easy even for an Englishman to insult. He remarks of Castlereagh, after one of his first interviews with that nobleman: "His deportment is sufficiently graceful, and his person is handsome. His manner was cold, but not absolutely repulsive." Before he left he had the pleasure of having Mr. Canning specially seek acquaintance with him. He met, of course, many distinguished and many agreeable persons during his residence, and partook of many festivities, especially of numerous civic banquets at which toasts were formally given in the dullest English fashion and he was obliged to display his capacity for "table-cloth oratory," as he called it, more than was agreeable to him.

He was greatly bored by these solemn and pompous feedings. Partly in order to escape them he took a house at Ealing, and lived there during the greater part of his stay in England. "One of the strongest reasons for my remaining out of town," he writes, "is to escape the frequency of invitations at late hours, which consume so much precious time, and with the perpetually mortifying consciousness of inability to return the civility in the same manner." The republican simplicity, not to say poverty, forced upon American representatives abroad, was a very different matter in the censorious and unfriendly society of London from what it had been at the kindly disposed Court of St. Petersburg. The relationship between the mother country and the quondam colonies, especially at that juncture, was such as to render social life intolerably trying to an under-paid American minister.

Mr. Adams remained in England until June 15, 1817, when he sailed from Cowes, closing forever his long and honorable diplomatic career, and bidding his last farewell to Europe. He returned home to take the post of Secretary of State in the cabinet of James Monroe, then lately inaugurated as President of the United States.

CHAPTER II

SECRETARY OF STATE AND PRESIDENT

From the capitals of Russia and Great Britain to the capital of the United States was a striking change. Washington, in its early struggle for existence, was so unattractive a spot, that foreigners must have been at a loss to discover the principle which had governed the selection. It combined all the ugliness with all the discomfort of an unprosperous frontier settlement on an ill-chosen site. What must European diplomats have thought of a capital city where snakes two feet long invaded gentlemen's drawing-rooms, and a carriage, bringing home the guests from a ball, could be upset by the impenetrable depth of quagmire at the very door of a foreign minister's residence. A description of the city given by Mr. Mills, a Representative from Massachusetts, in 1815, is pathetic in its unutterable horror: —

"It is impossible [he writes] for me to describe to you my feelings on entering this miserable desert, this scene of desolation and horror. . . . My antici-

pations were almost infinitely short of the reality, and I can truly say that the first appearance of this seat of the national government has produced in me nothing but absolute loathing and disgust."

If the place wore such a dreadful aspect to the simple denizen of a New England country town, what must it have seemed to those who were familiar with London and Paris? To them the social life must have been scarcely less dreary than the rest of the surroundings. Accordingly, with this change of scene, the Diary, so long a record of festivities sometimes dull and formal, but generally collecting interesting and distinguished persons, ceases almost wholly to refer to topics of society. Yet, of course, even the foul streets could not prevent people from occasionally meeting together. There were simple tea-drinkings, stupid weekly dinners at the President's, infrequent receptions by Mrs. Monroe, card-parties and conversation-parties, which at the British minister's were very "elegant," and at the French minister's were more gay. Mons. de Neuville, at his dinners, used to puzzle and astound the plain-living Yankees by serving dishes of "turkeys without bones, and puddings in the form of fowls, fresh cod disguised like a salad, and celery like oysters;" further, he scandalized some and demoralized others by

having dancing on Saturday evenings, which the New England ladies had been "educated to consider as holy time." Mr. and Mrs. Adams used to give weekly parties on Tuesday evenings, and apparently many persons stood not a little in awe of these entertainments and of the givers of them, by reason of their superior familiarity with the manners and customs of the best society of Europe. Mrs. Adams was, "on the whole, a very pleasant and agreeable woman; but the Secretary [had] no talent to entertain a mixed company, either by conversation or manners;" thus writes this same Mr. Mills, whose sentiments towards Mr. Adams were those of respect rather than of personal liking. The favorite dissipation then consisted in card-playing, and the stakes were too often out of all just proportion to the assets of the gamesters. At one time Mr. Clay was reputed to have lost $8,000, an amount so considerable for him as to weigh upon his mind to the manifest detriment of his public functions. But sometimes the gentlemen resident in the capital met for purposes less innocent than Saturday evening cotillons, or even than extravagant betting at the card-table, and stirred the dulness of society by a duel. Mr. Adams tells of one affair of this sort, fought between ex-Senator Mason, of Virginia, and his cousin, wherein the

weapons used were muskets, and the distance was only six paces. Mason was killed; his cousin was wounded, and only by a lucky accident escaped with his life. Mr. Adams had little time and less taste for either the amusements or the dangers thus offered to him; he preferred to go to bed in good season, to get up often long before daybreak, and to labor assiduously the livelong day. His favorite exercise was swimming in the Potomac, where he accomplished feats which would have been extraordinary for a young and athletic man.

The most important, perplexing, and time-consuming duties then called for by the condition of public affairs happened to fall within Mr. Adams's department. Monroe's administration has been christened the "era of good feeling;" and, so far as political divisions among the people at large were concerned, this description is correct enough. There were no great questions of public policy dividing the nation. There could hardly be said to be two political parties. With the close of the war the malcontent Federalists had lost the only substantial principle upon which they had been able vigorously to oppose the administration, and as a natural consequence the party rapidly shrank to insignificant proportions, and became of hardly more importance than were the Jac-

obites in England after their last hopes had been quenched by the failure of the Rebellion of '45. The Federalist faith, like Jacobitism, lingered in a few neighborhoods, and was maintained by a few old families, who managed to associate it with a sense of their own pride and dignity; but as an effective opposition or influential party organization it was effete, and no successor was rising out of its ruins. In a broad way, therefore, there was political harmony to a very remarkable degree.

But among individuals there was by no means a prevailing good feeling. Not held together by the pressure exerted by the antagonism of a strong hostile force, the prominent men of the Cabinet and in Congress were busily employed in promoting their own individual interests. Having no great issues with which to identify themselves, and upon which they could openly and honorably contend for the approval of the nation, their only means for securing their respective private ends lay in secretly overreaching and supplanting each other. Infinite skill was exerted by each to inveigle his rival into an unpopular position or a compromising light. By a series of precedents Mr. Adams, as Secretary of State, appeared most prominent as a candidate for the succession to the Presidency. But Mr. Crawford, in the Treasury Department,

had been very near obtaining the nomination instead of Monroe, and he was firmly resolved to secure it so soon as Mr. Monroe's eight years should have elapsed. He, therefore, finding much leisure left upon his hands by the not very exacting business of his office, devoted his ingenuity to devising schemes for injuring the prestige of Mr. Adams. Mr. Clay also had been greatly disappointed that he had not been summoned to be Secretary of State, and so made heir apparent. His personal enmity was naturally towards Mr. Monroe; his political enmity necessarily also included Mr. Adams, whose appointment he had privately sought to prevent. He therefore at once set himself assiduously to oppose and thwart the administration, and to make it unsuccessful and unpopular. That Clay was in the main and upon all weighty questions an honest statesman and a real patriot must be admitted, but just at this period no national crisis called his nobler qualities into action, and his course was largely influenced by selfish considerations. It was not long before Mr. Calhoun also entered the lists, though in a manner less discreditable to himself, personally, than were the resources of Crawford and Clay. The daily narrations and comments of Mr. Adams display and explain in a manner highly instructive, if not altogether

Wm. H. Crawford

agreeable, the ambitions and the manœuvres, the hollow alliances and unworthy intrigues, not only of these three, but also of many other estimable gentlemen then in political life. The difference between those days and our own seems not so great as the *laudatores temporis acti* are wont to proclaim it. The elaborate machinery which has since been constructed was then unknown; rivals relied chiefly upon their own astuteness and the aid of a few personal friends and adherents for carrying on contests and attaining ends which are now sought by vastly more complex methods. What the stage-coach of that period was to the railroads of to-day, or what the hand-loom was to our great cotton mills, such also was the political intriguing of cabinet ministers, senators, and representatives to our present party machinery. But the temper was no better, honor was no keener, the sense of public duty was little more disinterested then than now. One finds no serious traces of vulgar financial dishonesty recorded in these pages, in which Mr. Adams has handed down the political life of the second and third decades of our century with a photographic accuracy. But one does not see a much higher level of faithfulness to ideal standards in political life than now exists.

As has been said, it so happened that in Mr.

Monroe's administration the heaviest burden of labor and responsibility rested upon Mr. Adams; the most important and most perplexing questions fell within his department. Domestic breaches had been healed, but foreign breaches gaped with threatening jaws. War with Spain seemed imminent. Her South American colonies were then waging their contest for independence, and naturally looked to the late successful rebels of the northern continent for acts of neighborly sympathy and good fellowship. Their efforts to obtain official recognition and the exchange of ministers with the United States were eager and persistent. Privateers fitted out at Baltimore gave the State Department scarcely less cause for anxiety than the shipbuilders of Liverpool gave to the English Cabinet in 1863–64. These perplexities, as is well known, caused the passage of the first "Neutrality Act," which first formulated and has since served to establish the principle of international obligation in such matters, and has been the basis of all subsequent legislation upon the subject not only in this country but also in Great Britain.

The European powers, impelled by a natural distaste for rebellion by colonists, and also believing that Spain would in time prevail over the insurgents, turned a deaf ear to South American agents. But in the United States it was

different. Here it was anticipated that the revolted communities were destined to win; Mr. Adams records this as his own opinion; besides which there was also a natural sympathy felt by our people in such a conflict in their own quarter of the globe. Nevertheless, in many anxious cabinet discussions, the President and the Secretary of State established the policy of reserve and caution. Rebels against an established government are like plaintiffs in litigation; the burden of proof is upon them, and the neutral nations who are a sort of quasi-jurors must not commit themselves to a decision prematurely. The grave and inevitable difficulties besetting the administration in this matter were seriously enhanced by the conduct of Mr. Clay. Seeking nothing so eagerly as an opportunity to harass the government, he could have found none more to his taste than this question of South American recognition. His enthusiastic and rhetorical temperament rejoiced in such a topic for his luxuriant oratory, and he lauded freedom and abused the administration with a force of expression far from gratifying to the responsible heads of government in their troublesome task.

Apart from these matters the United States had direct disputes of a threatening character pending with Spain concerning the boundaries

of Louisiana. Naturally enough boundary lines in the half explored wilderness of this vast continent were not then marked with that indisputable accuracy which many generations and much bloodshed had achieved in Europe; and of all uncertain boundaries that of Louisiana was the most so. Area enough to make two or three States, more or less, might or might not be included therein. Such doubts had proved a ready source of quarrel, which could hardly be assuaged by General Jackson marching about in unquestionable Spanish territory, seizing towns and hanging people after his lawless, ignorant, energetic fashion. Mr. Adams's chief labor, therefore, was by no means of a promising character, being nothing less difficult than to conclude a treaty between enraged Spain and the rapacious United States, where there was so much wrong and so much right on both sides, and such a wide obscure realm of doubt between the two that an amicable agreement might well seem not only beyond expectation but beyond hope.

Many and various also were the incidental obstacles in Mr. Adams's way. Not the least lay in the ability of Don Onis, the Spanish Minister, an ambassador well selected for his important task and whom the American thus described: —

"Cold, calculating, wily, always commanding his own temper, proud because he is a Spaniard, but supple and cunning, accommodating the tone of his pretensions precisely to the degree of endurance of his opponent, bold and overbearing to the utmost extent to which it is tolerated, careless of what he asserts or how grossly it is proved to be unfounded, his morality appears to be that of the Jesuits as exposed by Pascal. He is laborious, vigilant, and ever attentive to his duties; a man of business and of the world."

Fortunately this so dangerous negotiator was hardly less anxious than Mr. Adams to conclude a treaty. Yet he, too, had his grave difficulties to encounter. Spanish arrogance had not declined with the decline of Spanish strength, and the concessions demanded from that ancient monarchy by the upstart republic seemed at once exasperating and humiliating. The career of Jackson in Florida, while it exposed the weakness of Spain, also sorely wounded her pride. Nor could the grandees, three thousand miles away, form so accurate an opinion of the true condition and prospects of affairs as could Don Onis upon this side of the water. One day, begging Mr. Adams to meet him upon a question of boundary, "he insisted much upon the infinite pains he had taken to prevail upon his government to come to terms of accommodation," and

pathetically declared that "the King's Council was composed of such ignorant and stupid *nigauds*, grandees of Spain, and priests," that Mr. Adams "could have no conception of their obstinacy and imbecility."

Other difficulties in Mr. Adams's way were such as ought not to have been encountered. The only substantial concession which he was willing to make was in accepting the Sabine instead of the Rio del Norte as the southwestern boundary of Louisiana. But no sooner did rumors of this possible yielding get abroad than he was notified that Mr. Clay "would take ground against" any treaty embodying it. From Mr. Crawford a more dangerous and insidious policy was to be feared. Presumably he would be well pleased either to see Mr. Adams fail altogether in the negotiation, or to see him conclude a treaty which would be in some essential feature odious to the people.

"That all his conduct [wrote Mr. Adams] is governed by his views to the Presidency, as the ultimate successor to Mr. Monroe, and that his hopes depend upon a result unfavorable to the success or at least to the popularity of the Administration, is perfectly clear. . . . His talent is intrigue. And as it is in the foreign affairs that the success or failure of the Administration will be most conspicuous, and as their success would promote the reputation and in-

fluence, and their failure would lead to the disgrace of the Secretary of State, Crawford's personal views centre in the ill-success of the Administration in its foreign relations; and, perhaps unconscious of his own motives, he will always be impelled to throw obstacles in its way, and to bring upon the Department of State especially any feeling of public dissatisfaction that he can, . . . and although himself a member of the Administration, he perceives every day more clearly that his only prospect of success hereafter depends upon the failure of the Administration by measures of which he must take care to make known his disapprobation."

President Monroe was profoundly anxious for the consummation of the treaty, and though for a time he was in perfect accord with Mr. Adams, yet as the Spanish minister gradually drew nearer and nearer to a full compliance with the American demands, Monroe began to fear that the Secretary would carry his unyielding habit too far, and by insistence upon extreme points which might well enough be given up, would allow the country to drift into war.

Fortunately, as it turned out, Mr. Adams was not afraid to take the whole responsibility of success or failure upon his own shoulders, showing indeed a high and admirable courage and constancy amid such grave perplexities, in which it seemed that all his future political fortunes

were involved. He caused the proffered mediation of Great Britain to be rejected. He availed himself of no aid save only the services of Mons. de Neuville, the French minister, who took a warm interest in the negotiation, expostulated and argued constantly with Don Onis and sometimes with Mr. Adams, served as a channel of communication and carried messages, propositions, and denials, which could better come filtered through a neutral go-between than pass direct from principal to principal. In fact, Mr. Adams needed no other kind of aid except just this which was so readily furnished by the civil and obliging Frenchman. As if he had been a mathematician solving a problem in dynamics, he seemed to have measured the precise line to which the severe pressure of Spanish difficulties would compel Don Onis to advance. This line he drew sharply, and taking his stand upon it in the beginning he made no important alterations in it to the end. Day by day the Spaniard would reluctantly approach toward him at one point or another, solemnly protesting that he could not make another move, by argument and entreaty urging, almost imploring, Mr. Adams in turn to advance and meet him. But Mr. Adams stood rigidly still, sometimes not a little vexed by the other's lingering manœuvres, and actually once

saying to the courtly Spaniard that he "was so wearied out with the discussion that it had become nauseous;" and, again, that he "really could discuss no longer, and had given it up in despair." Yet all the while he was never wholly free from anxiety concerning the accuracy of his calculations as to how soon the Don might on his side also come to a final stand. Many a tedious and alarming pause there was, but after each halt progress was in time renewed. At last the consummation was reached, and except in the aforementioned matter of the Sabine boundary no concession even in details had been made by Mr. Adams. The United States was to receive Florida, and in return only agreed to settle the disputed claims of certain of her citizens against Spain to an amount not to exceed five million dollars; while the claims of Spanish subjects against the United States were wholly expunged. The western boundary was so established as to secure for this country the much-coveted outlet to the shores of the "South Sea," as the Pacific Ocean was called, south of the Columbia River; the line also was run along the southern banks of the Red and Arkansas rivers, leaving all the islands to the United States and precluding Spain from the right of navigation. Mr. Adams had achieved a great triumph.

On February 22, 1819, the two negotiators

signed and sealed the counterparts of the treaty. Mr. Adams notes that it is "perhaps the most important day of my life," and justly called it "a great epoch in our history." Yet on the next day the "Washington City Gazette" came out with a strong condemnation of the Sabine concession, and expressed the hope that the Senate would not agree to it. "This paragraph," said Mr. Adams, "comes directly or indirectly from Mr. Clay." But the paragraph did no harm, for on the following day the treaty was confirmed by an unanimous vote of the Senate.

It was not long, however, before the pleasure justly derivable from the completion of this great labor was cruelly dashed. It appeared that certain enormous grants of land, made by the Spanish king to three of his nobles, and which were supposed to be annulled by the treaty, so that the territory covered by them would become the public property of the United States, bore date earlier than had been understood, and for this reason would, by the terms of the treaty, be left in full force. This was a serious matter, and such steps as were still possible to set it right were promptly taken. Mr. Adams appealed to Don Onis to state in writing that he himself had understood that these grants were to be annulled, and that such had been the intention of the treaty. The Spaniard replied

in a shape imperfectly satisfactory. He shuffled, evaded, and laid himself open to suspicion of unfair dealing, though the charge could not be regarded as fully proved against him. Mr. Adams, while blaming himself for carelessness in not having more closely examined original documents, yet felt "scarce a doubt" that Onis "did intend by artifice to cover the grants while we were under the undoubting impression they were annulled;" and he said to M. de Neuville, concerning this dark transaction, that "it was not the ingenious device of a public minister, but '*une fourberie de Scapin.*'" Before long the rumor got abroad in the public prints in the natural shape of a "malignant distortion," and Mr. Adams was compelled to see with chagrin his supposed brilliant success threatening to turn actually to his grave discredit by reason of this unfortunate oversight.

What might have been the result had the treaty been ratified by Spain can only be surmised. But it so befell — happily enough for the United States and for Mr. Adams, as it afterwards turned out — that the Spanish government refused to ratify. The news was, however, that they would forthwith dispatch a new minister to explain this refusal and to renew negotiations.

For his own private part Mr. Adams strove

to endure this buffet of unkindly fortune with that unflinching and stubborn temper, slightly dashed with bitterness, which stood him in good stead in many a political trial during his hard-fighting career. But in his official capacity he had also to consider and advise what it behooved the administration to do under the circumstances. The feeling was widespread that the United States ought to possess Florida, and that Spain had paltered with us long enough. More than once in cabinet meetings during the negotiation the Secretary of State, who was always prone to strong measures, had expressed a wish for an act of Congress authorizing the Executive to take forcible possession of Florida and of Galveston in the event of Spain refusing to satisfy the reasonable demands made upon her. Now, stimulated by indignant feeling, his prepossession in favor of vigorous action was greatly strengthened, and his counsel was that the United States should prepare at once to take and hold the disputed territory, and indeed some undisputed Spanish territory also. But Mr. Monroe and the rest of the Cabinet preferred a milder course; and France and Great Britain ventured to express to this country a hope that no violent action would be precipitately taken. So the matter lay by for a while, awaiting the coming of the promised envoy from Spain.

At this time the great question of the admission of Missouri into the Union of States began to agitate Congress and the nation. Mr. Adams, deeply absorbed in the perplexing affairs of his department, into which this domestic problem did not enter, was at first careless of it. His ideas concerning the matter, he wrote, were a "chaos;" but it was a "chaos" into which his interest in public questions soon compelled him to bring order. In so doing he for the first time fairly exposes his intense repulsion for slavery, his full appreciation of the irrepressible character of the conflict between the slave and the free populations, and the sure tendency of that conflict to a dissolution of the Union. Few men at that day read the future so clearly. While dissolution was generally regarded as a threat not really intended to be carried out, and compromises were supposed to be amply sufficient to control the successive emergencies, the underlying moral force of the anti-slavery movement acting against the encroaching necessities of the slave-holding communities constituted an element and involved possibilities which Mr. Adams, from his position of observation outside the immediate controversy, noted with foreseeing accuracy. He discerned in passing events the "title-page to a great tragic volume;" and he predicted that the more or less distant but

sure end must be an attempt to dissolve the Union. His own position was distinctly defined from the outset, and his strong feelings were vigorously expressed. He beheld with profound regret the superiority of the slave-holding party in ability; he remarked sadly how greatly they excelled in debating power their lukewarm opponents; he was filled with indignation against the Northern men of Southern principles. "Slavery," he wrote, "is the great and foul stain upon the North American Union, and it is a contemplation worthy of the most exalted soul whether its total abolition is or is not practicable." "A life devoted to" the emancipation problem "would be nobly spent or sacrificed." He talks with much acerbity of expression about the "slave-drivers," and the "flagrant image of human inconsistency" presented by men who had "the Declaration of Independence on their lips and the merciless scourge of slavery in their hands." "Never," he says, "since human sentiments and human conduct were influenced by human speech was there a theme for eloquence like the free side of this question. . . . Oh, if but one man could arise with a genius capable of comprehending, and an utterance capable of communicating those eternal truths that belong to this question, to lay bare in all its nakedness that outrage upon the goodness of God, human

slavery; now is the time and this is the occasion, upon which such a man would perform the duties of an angel upon earth." Before the Abolitionists had begun to preach their great crusade this was strong and ardent language for a statesman's pen. Nor were these exceptional passages; there is much more of the same sort at least equally forcible. Mr. Adams notes an interesting remark made to him by Calhoun at this time. The great Southern chief, less prescient than Mr. Adams, declared that he did not think that the slavery question "would produce a dissolution of the Union; but if it should, the South would be from necessity compelled to form an alliance offensive and defensive with Great Britain."

Concerning a suggestion that civil war might be preferable to the extension of slavery beyond the Mississippi, Adams said: "This is a question between the rights of human nature and the Constitution of the United States" — a form of stating the case which leaves no doubt concerning his ideas of the intrinsic right and wrong in the matter. His own notion was that slavery could not be got rid of within the Union, but that the only method would be dissolution, after which he trusted that the course of events would in time surely lead to reorganization upon the basis of universal freedom for all.

He was not a disunionist in any sense, yet it is evident that his strong tendency and inclination were to regard emancipation as a weight in the scales heavier than union, if it should ever come to the point of an option between the two.

Strangely enough the notion of a forcible retention of the slave States within the Union does not seem to have been at this time a substantial element of consideration. Mr. Adams acknowledged that there was no way at once of preserving the Union and escaping from the present emergency save through the door of compromise. He maintained strenuously the power of Congress to prohibit slavery in the Territories, and denied that either Congress or a state government could establish slavery as a new institution in any State in which it was not already existing and recognized by law.

This agitation of the slavery question made itself felt in a way personally interesting to Mr. Adams, by the influence it was exerting upon men's feelings concerning the still pending and dubious treaty with Spain. The South became anxious to lay hands upon the Floridas and upon as far-reaching an area as possible in the direction of Mexico, in order to carve it up into more slave States ; the North, on the other hand, no longer cared very eagerly for an extension of the Union upon its southern side. Sectional in-

terests were getting to be more considered than national. Mr. Adams could not but recognize that in the great race for the Presidency, in which he could hardly help being a competitor, the chief advantage which he seemed to have won when the Senate unanimously ratified the Spanish treaty, had almost wholly vanished since that treaty had been repudiated by Spain and was now no longer desired by a large proportion of his own countrymen.

Matters stood thus when the new Spanish envoy, Vivês, arrived. Other elements, which there is not space to enumerate here, besides those referred to, now entering newly into the state of affairs, further reduced the improbability of agreement almost to hopelessness. Mr. Adams, despairing of any other solution than a forcible seizure of Florida, to which he had long been far from averse, now visibly relaxed his efforts to meet the Spanish negotiator. Perhaps no other course could have been more effectual in securing success than this obvious indifference to it. In the prevalent condition of public feeling and of his own sentiments Mr. Adams easily assumed towards General Vivês a decisive bluntness, not altogether consonant to the habits of diplomacy, and manifested an unchangeable stubbornness which left no room for discussion. His position was simply that Spain

might make such a treaty as the United States demanded, or might take the consequences of her refusal. His dogged will wore out the Spaniard's pride, and after a fruitless delay the King and Cortes ratified the treaty in its original shape, with the important addition of an explicit annulment of the land grants. It was again sent in to the Senate, and in spite of the "continued, systematic, and laborious effort" of "Mr. Clay and his partisans to make it unpopular," it was ratified by a handsome majority, there being against it "only four votes — Brown, of Louisiana, who married a sister of Clay's wife; Richard M. Johnson, of Kentucky, against his own better judgment, from mere political subserviency to Clay; Williams, of Tennessee, from party impulses connected with hatred of General Jackson; and Trimble, of Ohio, from some maggot of the brain." Two years had elapsed since the former ratification, and no little patience had been required to await so long the final achievement of a success so ardently longed for, once apparently gained, and anon so cruelly thwarted. But the triumph was rather enhanced than diminished by all this difficulty and delay. A long and checkered history, wherein appeared infinite labor, many a severe trial of temper and hard test of moral courage, bitter disappointment, ignoble artifices

of opponents, ungenerous opposition growing out of unworthy personal motives at home, was now at last closed by a chapter which appeared only the more gratifying by contrast with what had gone before. Mr. Adams recorded, with less of exultation than might have been pardonable, the utter discomfiture of "all the calculators of my downfall by the Spanish negotiation," and reflected cheerfully that he had been left with "credit rather augmented than impaired by the result," — credit not in excess of his deserts. Many years afterwards, in changed circumstances, an outcry was raised against the agreement which was arrived at concerning the southwestern boundary of Louisiana. Most unjustly it was declared that Mr. Adams had sacrificed a portion of the territory of the United States. But political motives were too plainly to be discerned in these tardy criticisms; and though General Jackson saw fit, for personal reasons, to animadvert severely upon the clause establishing this boundary line, yet there was abundant evidence to show not only that he, like almost everybody else, had been greatly pleased with it at the time, but even that he had then upon consultation expressed a deliberate and special approval.

The same day, February 22, 1821, closed, says Mr. Adams, "two of the most memorable

transactions of my life." That he should speak thus of the exchange of ratifications of the Spanish treaty is natural; but the other so "memorable transaction" may not appear of equal magnitude. It was the sending in to Congress of his report upon weights and measures. This was one of those vast labors, involving tenfold more toil than all the negotiations with Onis and Vivês, but bringing no proportionate fame, however well it might be performed. The subject was one which had "occupied for the last sixty years many of the ablest men in Europe, and to which all the power and all the philosophical and mathematical learning and ingenuity of France and of Great Britain" had during that period been incessantly directed. It was fairly enough described as a "fearful and oppressive task." Upon its dry and uncongenial difficulties Mr. Adams had been employed with his wonted industry for upwards of four years; he now spoke of the result modestly as "a hurried and imperfect work." But others, who have had to deal with the subject, have found this report a solid and magnificent monument of research and reflection, which has not even yet been superseded by later treatises. Mr. Adams was honest in labor as in everything, and was never careless at points where inaccuracy or lack of thoroughness might be ex-

pected to escape detection. Hence his success in a task upon which it is difficult to imagine other statesmen of that day — Clay, Webster, or Calhoun, for example — so much as making an effort. The topic is not one concerning which readers would tolerate much lingering. Suffice it then to say that the document illustrated the ability and the character of the man, and so with this brief mention to dismiss in a paragraph an achievement which, had it been accomplished in any more showy department, would alone have rendered Mr. Adams famous.

It is highly gratifying now to look back upon the high spirit and independent temper uniformly displayed by Mr. Adams abroad and at home in all dealings with foreign powers. Never in any instance did he display the least tinge of that rodomontade and boastful extravagance which have given an underbred air to so many of our diplomats, and which inevitably cause the basis for such self-laudation to appear of dubious sufficiency. But he had the happy gift of a native pride which enabled him to support in the most effective manner the dignity of the people for whom he spoke. For example, in treaties between the United States and European powers the latter were for a time wont to name themselves first throughout the instruments, contrary to the custom of alternation practised in trea-

ties between themselves. With some difficulty, partly interposed, it must be confessed, by his own American coadjutors, Mr. Adams succeeded in putting a stop to this usage. It was a matter of insignificant detail, in one point of view; but in diplomacy insignificant details often symbolize important facts, and there is no question that this habit had been construed as a tacit but intentional arrogance of superiority on the part of the Europeans.

For a long period after the birth of the country there was a strong tendency, not yet so eradicated as to be altogether undiscoverable, on the part of American statesmen to keep one eye turned covertly askance upon the trans-Atlantic courts, and to consider, not without a certain anxious deference, what appearance the new United States might be presenting to the critical eyes of foreign countries and diplomats. Mr. Adams was never guilty of such indirect admissions of an inferiority which apparently he never felt. In the matter of the acquisition of Florida, Crawford suggested that England and France regarded the people of the United States as ambitious and encroaching; wherefore he advised a moderate policy in order to remove this impression. Mr. Adams on the other side declared that he was not in favor of our giving ourselves any concern whatever

about the opinions of any foreign power. "If the world do not hold us for Romans," he said, "they will take us for Jews, and of the two vices I would rather be charged with that which has greatness mingled in its composition." His views were broad and grand. He was quite ready to have the world become "familiarized with the idea of considering our proper dominion to be the continent of North America." This extension he declared to be a "law of nature." To suppose that Spain and England could, through the long lapse of time, retain their possessions on this side of the Atlantic seemed to him a "physical, moral, and political absurdity."

The doctrine which has been christened with the name of President Monroe seems likely to win for him the permanent glory of having originated the wise policy which that familiar phrase now signifies. It might, however, be shown that by right of true paternity the bantling should have borne a different patronymic. Not only is the "Monroe Doctrine," as that phrase is customarily construed in our day, much more comprehensive than the simple theory first expressed by Monroe and now included in the modern doctrine as a part in the whole, but a principle more fully identical with the imperial one of to-day had been conceived and

shaped by Mr. Adams before the delivery of Monroe's famous message. As has just been remarked, he looked forward to the possession of the whole North American continent by the United States as a sure destiny, and for his own part, whenever opportunity offered, he was never backward to promote this glorious ultimate consummation. He was in favor of the acquisition of Louisiana, whatever fault he might find with the scheme of Mr. Jefferson for making it a state; he was ready in 1815 to ask the British plenipotentiaries to cede Canada simply as a matter of common sense and mutual convenience, and as the comfortable result of a war in which the United States had been worsted; he never labored harder than in negotiating for the Floridas, and in pushing our western boundaries to the Pacific; in April, 1823, he wrote to the American minister at Madrid the significant remark: "It is scarcely possible to resist the conviction that the annexation of Cuba to our Federal Republic will be indispensable to the continuance and integrity of the Union." Encroachments never seemed distasteful to him, and he was always forward to stretch a point in order to advocate or defend a seizure of disputed North American territory, as in the cases of Amelia Island, Pensacola, and Galveston. When discussion arose with Russia concerning

her possessions on the northwest coast of this continent, Mr. Adams audaciously told the Russian minister, Baron Tuyl, July 17, 1823, "that we should contest the rights of Russia to *any* territorial establishment on this continent, and that we should assume distinctly the principle that the American continents are no longer subjects for any new European colonial establishments." "This," says Mr. Charles Francis Adams in a footnote to the passage in the Diary, "is the first hint of the policy so well known afterwards as the Monroe Doctrine." Nearly five months later, referring to the same matter in his message to Congress, December 2, 1823, President Monroe said: "The occasion has been judged proper for asserting, as a principle in which the rights and interests of the United States are involved, that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers."

It will be observed that both Mr. Adams and President Monroe used the phrase "continents," including thereby South as well as North America. A momentous question was imminent, which fortunately never called for a determination by action, but which in this latter part of 1823 threatened to do so at any moment.

Cautious and moderate as the United States had been, under Mr. Adams's guidance, in recognizing the freedom and autonomy of the South American states, yet in time the recognition was made of one after another, and the emancipation of South America had come, while Mr. Adams was yet Secretary, to be regarded as an established fact. But now, in 1823–24, came mutterings from across the Atlantic indicating a strong probability that the members of the Holy Alliance would interfere in behalf of monarchical and anti-revolutionary principles, and would assist in the resubjugation of the successful insurgents. That each one of the powers who should contribute to this huge crusade would expect and receive territorial reward could not be doubted. Mr. Adams, in unison with most of his countrymen, contemplated with profound distrust and repulsion the possibility of such an European inroad. Stimulated by the prospect of so unwelcome neighbors, he prepared some dispatches, "drawn to correspond exactly" with the sentiments of Mr. Monroe's message, in which he appears to have taken a very high and defiant position. These documents, coming before the Cabinet for consideration, caused some flutter among his associates. In the possible event of the Holy Alliance actually intermeddling in South American

affairs, it was said, the principles enunciated by the Secretary of State would involve this country in war with a very formidable confederation. Mr. Adams acknowledged this, but courageously declared that in such a crisis he felt quite ready to take even this spirited stand. His audacious spirit went far in advance of the cautious temper of the Monroe administration; possibly it went too far in advance of the dictates of a wise prudence, though fortunately the course of events never brought this question to trial; and it is at least gratifying to contemplate such a manifestation of daring temper.

But though so bold and independent, Mr. Adams was not habitually reckless nor prone to excite animosity by needless arrogance in action or extravagance in principle. In any less perilous extremity than was presented by this menaced intrusion of combined Europe he followed rigidly the wise rule of non-interference. For many years before this stage was reached he had been holding in difficult check the enthusiasts who, under the lead of Mr. Clay, would have embroiled us with Spain and Portugal. Once he was made the recipient of a very amusing proposition from the Portuguese minister, that the United States and Portugal, as "the two great powers of the western hemi-

sphere," should concert together a grand American system. The drollery of this notion was of a kind that Mr. Adams could appreciate, though to most manifestations of humor he was utterly impervious. But after giving vent to some contemptuous merriment he adds, with a just and serious pride: "As to an American system, we have it; we constitute the whole of it; there is no community of interests or of principles between North and South America." This sound doctrine was put forth in 1820; and it was only modified in the manner that we have seen during a brief period in 1823, in face of the alarming vision not only of Spain and Portugal restored to authority, but of Russia in possession of California and more, France in possession of Mexico, and perhaps Great Britain becoming mistress of Cuba.

So far as European affairs were concerned, Mr. Adams always and consistently refused to become entangled in them, even in the slightest and most indirect manner. When the cause of Greek liberty aroused the usual throng of noisy advocates for active interference, he contented himself with expressions of cordial sympathy, accompanied by perfectly distinct and explicit statements that under no circumstances could any aid in the way of money or auxiliary forces be expected from this country. Neutrals

we were and would remain in any and all European quarrels. When Stratford Canning urged, with the uttermost measure of persistence of which even he was capable, that for the suppression of the slave trade some such arrangement might be made as that of mixed tribunals for the trial of slave-trading vessels, and alleged that divers European powers were uniting for this purpose, Mr. Adams suggested, as an insuperable obstacle, "the general extra-European policy of the United States — a policy which they had always pursued as best suited to their own interests, and best adapted to harmonize with those of Europe. This policy had also been that of Europe, which had never considered the United States as belonging to her system. . . . It was best for both parties that they should continue to do so." In any European combinations, said Mr. Adams, in which the United States should become a member, she must soon become an important power, and must always be, in many respects, an uncongenial one. It was best that she should keep wholly out of European politics, even of such leagues as one for the suppression of the slave trade. He added, that he did not wish his language to be construed as importing "an unsocial and sulky spirit on the part of the United States;" for no such tem-

per existed; it had simply been the policy of Europe to consider this country as standing aloof from all European federations, and in this treatment "we had acquiesced, because it fell in with our own policy."

In a word, Mr. Adams, by his language and actions, established and developed precisely that doctrine which has since been adopted by this country under the doubly incorrect name of the "Monroe Doctrine," — a name doubly incorrect, because even the real "Monroe Doctrine" was not an original idea of Mr. Monroe, and because the doctrine which now goes by that name is not identical with the doctrine which Monroe did once declare. Mr. Adams's principle was simply that the United States would take no part whatsoever in foreign politics, not even in those of South America, save in the extreme event, eliminated from among things possible in this generation, of such an interference as was contemplated by the Holy Alliance; and that, on the other hand, she would permit no European power to gain any new foothold upon this continent. Time and experience have not enabled us to improve upon the principles which Mr. Adams worked out for us.

Mr. Adams had some pretty stormy times with Mr. Stratford Canning — the same gentleman who in his later life is familiar to the readers

of Kinglake's "History of the Crimean War" as Lord Stratford de Redclyffe, or Eltchi. That minister's overbearing and dictatorial deportment was afterwards not out of place when he was representing the protecting power of Great Britain in the court of the "sick man." But when he began to display his arrogance in the face of Mr. Adams he found that he was bearding one who was at least his equal in pride and temper. The naïve surprise which he manifested on making this discovery is very amusing, and the accounts of the interviews between the two are among the most pleasing episodes in the history of our foreign relations. Nor are they less interesting as a sort of confidential peep at the asperities of diplomacy. It appears that besides the composed and formal dignity of phrase which alone the public knows in published state papers and official correspondence, there is also an official language of wrath and retort not at all artificial or stilted, but quite homelike and human in its sound.

One subject much discussed between Mr. Adams and Mr. Canning related to the English propositions for joint efforts to suppress the slave trade. Great Britain had engaged with much vigor and certainly with an admirable humanity in this cause. Her scheme was that each power should keep armed cruisers on

the coast of Africa, that the war-ships of either nation might search the merchant vessels of the other, and that mixed courts of joint commissioners should try all cases of capture. This plan had been urged upon the several European nations, but with imperfect success. Portugal, Spain, and the Netherlands had assented to it; Russia, France, Austria, and Prussia had rejected it. Mr. Adams's notion was that the ministry were, in their secret hearts, rather lukewarm in the business, but that they were so pressed by "the party of the saints in Parliament" that they were obliged to make a parade of zeal. Whether this suspicion was correct or not, it is certain that Mr. Stratford Canning was very persistent in the presentation of his demands, and could not be persuaded to take No for an answer. Had it been possible to give any more favorable reply no one in the United States in that day would have been better pleased than Mr. Adams to do so. But the obstacles were insuperable. Besides the undesirability of departing from the "extra-European policy," the mixed courts would have been unconstitutional, and could not have been established even by act of Congress, while the claims advanced by Great Britain to search our ships for English-born seamen in time of war utterly precluded the possibility

of admitting any rights of search whatsoever upon her part, even in time of peace, for any purpose or in any shape. In vain did the Englishman reiterate his appeal. Mr. Adams as often explained that the insistence of England upon her outrageous claim had rendered the United States so sensitive upon the entire subject of search that no description of right of that kind could ever be tolerated. "All concession of principle," he said, "tended to encourage encroachment, and if naval officers were once habituated to search the vessels of other nations in time of peace for one thing, they would be still more encouraged to practise it for another thing in time of war." The only way for Great Britain to achieve her purpose would be "to bind herself by an article, as strong and explicit as language can make it, never again in time of war to take a man from an American vessel." This of course was an inadmissible proposition, and so Mr. Stratford Canning's incessant urgency produced no substantial results. This discussion, however, was generally harmonious. Once only, in its earlier stages, Mr. Adams notes a remark of Mr. Canning, repeated for the second time, and not altogether gratifying. He said, writes Mr. Adams, "that he should always receive any observations that I may make to him with a just defer-

ence to my advance of years — over him. This is one of those equivocal compliments which, according to Sterne, a Frenchman always returns with a bow."

It was when they got upon the matter of the American settlement at the mouth of the Columbia River, that the two struck fire. Possession of this disputed spot had been taken by the Americans, but was broken up by the British during the war of 1812. After the declaration of peace upon the *status ante bellum*, a British government vessel had been dispatched upon the special errand of making formal return of the port to the Americans. In January, 1821, certain remarks made in debate in the House of Representatives, followed soon afterward by publication in the "National Intelligencer" of a paper signed by Senator Eaton, led Mr. Canning to think that the Government entertained the design of establishing a substantial settlement at the mouth of the river. On January 26 he called upon Mr. Adams and inquired the intentions of the Administration in regard to this. Mr. Adams replied that an increase of the present settlement was not improbable. Thereupon Mr. Canning dropping the air of "easy familiarity" which had previously marked the intercourse between the two, and "assuming a tone more peremptory" than Mr. Adams "was disposed to endure," ex-

pressed his great surprise. Mr. Adams "with a corresponding change of tone" expressed equal surprise, "both at the form and substance of his address." Mr. Canning said that "he conceived such a settlement would be a direct violation of the article of the Convention of 20th October, 1818." Mr. Adams took down a volume, read the article, and said, "Now, sir, if you have any charge to make against the American Government for a violation of this article, you will please to make the communication in writing." Mr. Canning retorted, with great vehemence: —

"'And do you suppose, sir, that I am to be dictated to as to the manner in which I may think proper to communicate with the American Government?' I answered, 'No, sir. We know very well what are the privileges of foreign ministers, and mean to respect them. But you will give us leave to determine what communications we will receive, and how we will receive them; and you may be assured we are as little disposed to submit to dictation as to exercise it.' He then, in a louder and more passionate tone of voice, said: 'And am I to understand that I am to be refused henceforth any conference with you upon the subject of my mission?' 'Not at all, sir,' said I, 'my request is, that if you have anything further to say to me *upon this subject*, you would say it in writing. And my motive is to avoid what, both from the nature of the subject and from the manner in which

you have thought proper to open it, I foresee will tend only to mutual irritation, and not to an amicable arrangement.' With some abatement of tone, but in the same peremptory manner, he said, 'Am I to understand that you refuse any further conference with me on this subject?' I said, 'No. But you will understand that I am not pleased either with the grounds upon which you have sought this conference, nor with the questions which you have seen fit to put to me.'"

Mr. Adams then proceeded to expose the impropriety of a foreign minister demanding from the Administration an explanation of words uttered in debate in Congress, and also said that he supposed that the British had no claim to the territory in question. Mr. Canning rejoined, and referred to the sending out of the American ship of war Ontario, in 1817, without any notice to the British minister[1] at Washington, —

"speaking in a very emphatic manner and as if there had been an intended secret expedition . . . which had been detected only by the vigilance and penetration of the British minister. I answered, 'Why, Mr. Bagot did say something to me about it; but I certainly did not think him serious, and we had a good-humored laughing conversation on the occasion.' Canning, with great vehemence: 'You may rely upon it, sir, that it was no laughing matter to him; for I have seen his report to his government

[1] Then Mr. Bagot.

and know what his feelings concerning it were.' I replied, 'This is the first intimation I have ever received that Mr. Bagot took the slightest offence at what then passed between us, . . . and you will give me leave to say that when he left this country' — Here I was going to add that the last words he said to me were words of thanks for the invariable urbanity and liberality of my conduct and the personal kindness which he had uniformly received from me. But I could not finish the sentence. Mr. Canning, in a paroxysm of extreme irritation, broke out: 'I stop you there. I will not endure a misrepresentation of what I say. I never said that Mr. Bagot took offence at anything that had passed between him and you; and nothing that I said imported any such thing.' Then . . . added in the same passionate manner: 'I am treated like a school-boy.' I then resumed: 'Mr. Canning, I have a distinct recollection of the substance of the short conversation between Mr. Bagot and me at that time; and it was this' — 'No doubt, sir,' said Canning, interrupting me again, 'no doubt, sir, Mr. Bagot answered you like a man of good breeding and good humor.' "

Mr. Adams began again and succeeded in making, without further interruption, a careful recital of his talk with Mr. Bagot. While he was speaking Mr. Canning grew cooler, and expressed some surprise at what he heard. But in a few moments the conversation again became warm and personal. Mr. Adams remarked that

heretofore he had thrown off some of the "cautious reserve" which might have been "strictly regular" between them, and that

"'so long as his (Canning's) professions had been supported by his conduct' — Here Mr. Canning again stopped me by repeating with great vehemence, 'My conduct! I am responsible for my conduct only to my government!'"

Mr. Adams replied, substantially, that he could respect the rights of Mr. Canning and maintain his own, and that he thought the best mode of treating this topic in future would be by writing. Mr. Canning then expressed himself as

"'willing to forget all that had now passed.' I told him that I neither asked nor promised him to forget. . . . He asked again if he was to understand me as refusing to confer with him further on the subject. I said, 'No.' 'Would I appoint a time for that purpose?' I said, 'Now, if he pleased. . . . But as he appeared to be under some excitement, perhaps he might prefer some other time, in which case I would readily receive him to-morrow at one o'clock;' upon which he rose and took leave, saying he would come at that time."

The next day, accordingly, this genial pair again encountered. Mr. Adams noted at first in Mr. Canning's manner "an effort at coolness,

but no appearance of cheerfulness or good humor. I saw there was no relaxation of the tone he had yesterday assumed, and felt that none would on my part be suitable." They went over quietly enough some of the ground traversed the day before, Mr. Adams again explaining the impropriety of Mr. Canning questioning him concerning remarks made in debate in Congress. It was, he said, as if Mr. Rush, hearing in the House of Commons something said about sending troops to the Shetland Islands, should proceed to question Lord Castlereagh about it.

"'Have you,' said Mr. Canning, 'any claim to the Shetland Islands?' 'Have you any *claim*,' said I, 'to the mouth of Columbia River?' 'Why, do you not *know*,' replied he, 'that we have a claim?' 'I do not *know*,' said I, 'what you claim nor what you do not claim. You claim India; you claim Africa; you claim'— 'Perhaps,' said he, 'a piece of the moon.' 'No,' said I, 'I have not heard that you claim exclusively any part of the moon; but there is not a spot on *this* habitable globe that I could affirm you do not claim!'"

The conversation continued with alternations of lull and storm, Mr. Canning at times becoming warm and incensed and interrupting Mr. Adams, who retorted with a dogged asperity which must have been extremely irritating. Mr. Adams

said that he did "not expect to be plied with captious questions" to obtain indirectly that which had been directly denied. Mr. Canning, "exceedingly irritated," complained of the word "captious." Mr. Adams retaliated by reciting offensive language used by Mr. Canning, who in turn replied that he had been speaking only in self-defence. Mr. Canning found occasion to make again his peculiarly rasping remark that he should always strive to show towards Mr. Adams the deference due to his "more advanced years." After another very uncomfortable passage, Mr. Adams said that the behavior of Mr. Canning in making the observations of members of Congress a basis of official interrogations was a pretension the more necessary to be resisted because this

"'was not the first time it had been raised by a British minister here.' He asked, with great emotion, who that minister was. I answered, 'Mr. Jackson.' 'And you got rid of him!' said Mr. Canning, in a tone of violent passion — 'and you got rid of him! — and you got rid of him!' This repetition of the same words, always in the same tone, was with pauses of a few seconds between each of them, as if for a reply. I said: 'Sir, my reference to the pretension of Mr. Jackson was not' — Here Mr. Canning interrupted me by saying: 'If you think that by reference to Mr. Jackson I am to be intimi-

dated from the performance of my duty you will find yourself greatly mistaken.' 'I had not, sir,' said I, 'the most distant intention of intimidating you from the performance of your duty; nor was it with the intention of alluding to any subsequent occurrences of his mission; but' — Mr. Canning interrupted me again by saying, still in a tone of high exasperation, — 'Let me tell you, sir, that your reference to the case of Mr. Jackson is *exceedingly offensive.*' 'I do not know,' said I, 'whether I shall be able to finish what I intended to say, under such continual interruptions.'"

Mr. Canning thereupon intimated by a bow his willingness to listen, and Mr. Adams reiterated what in a more fragmentary way he had already said. Mr. Canning then made a formal speech, mentioning his desire "to cultivate harmony and smooth down all remnants of asperity between the two countries," again gracefully referred to the deference which he should at all times pay to Mr. Adams's age, and closed by declaring, with a significant emphasis, that he would "never forget the respect due from him *to the American Government.*" Mr. Adams bowed in silence and the stormy interview ended. A day or two afterward the disputants met by accident, and Mr. Canning showed such signs of resentment that there passed between them a "bare salutation."

In the condition of our relations with Great Britain at the time of these interviews any needless ill-feeling was strongly to be deprecated. But Mr. Adams's temperament was such that he always saw the greater chance of success in strong and spirited conduct; nor could he endure that the dignity of the Republic, any more than its safety, should take detriment in his hands. Moreover he understood Englishmen better perhaps than they have ever been understood by any other of the public men of the United States, and he handled and subdued them with a temper and skill highly agreeable to contemplate. The President supported him fully throughout the matter, and the discomfiture and wrath of Mr. Canning never became even indirectly a cause of regret to the country.

As the years allotted to Monroe passed on, the manœuvring among the candidates for the succession to the Presidency grew in activity. There were several possible presidents in the field, and during the "era of good feeling" many an aspiring politician had his brief period of mild expectancy followed in most cases only too surely by a hopeless relegation to obscurity. There were, however, four whose anticipations rested upon a substantial basis. William H. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, had been the rival of Monroe for nomination by the Con-

Stratford de R.

gressional caucus, and had then developed sufficient strength to make him justly sanguine that he might stand next to Monroe in the succession as he apparently did in the esteem of their common party. Mr. Clay, Speaker of the House of Representatives, had such expectations as might fairly grow out of his brilliant reputation, powerful influence in Congress, and great personal popularity. Mr. Adams was pointed out not only by his deserts but also by his position in the Cabinet, it having been the custom heretofore to promote the Secretary of State to the Presidency. It was not until the time of election was near at hand that the strength of General Jackson, founded of course upon the effect of his military prestige upon the masses of the people, began to appear to the other competitors a formidable element in the great rivalry. For a while Mr. Calhoun might have been regarded as a fifth, since he had already become the great chief of the South; but this cause of his strength was likewise his weakness, since it was felt that the North was fairly entitled to present the next candidate. The others, who at one time and another had aspirations, like De Witt Clinton and Tompkins, were never really formidable, and may be disregarded as insignificant threads in the complex political snarl which must be unravelled.

As a study of the dark side of political society during this period Mr. Adams's Diary is profoundly interesting. He writes with a charming absence of reserve. If he thinks there is rascality at work, he sets down the names of the knaves and expounds their various villainies of act and motive with delightfully outspoken frankness. All his life he was somewhat prone, it must be confessed, to depreciate the moral characters of others, and to suspect unworthy designs in the methods or ends of those who crossed his path. It was the not unnatural result of his own rigid resolve to be honest. Refraining with the stern conscientiousness, which was in the composition of his Puritan blood, from every act, whether in public or in private life, which seemed to him in the least degree tinged with immorality, he found a sort of compensation for the restraints and discomforts of his own austerity in judging severely the less punctilious world around him. Whatever other faults he had, it is unquestionable that his uprightness was as consistent and unvarying as can be reached by human nature. Yet his temptations were made the greater and the more cruel by the beliefs constantly borne in upon him that his rivals did not accept for their own governance in the contest the same rules by which he was pledged to himself to abide.

Jealousy enhanced suspicion, and suspicion in turn pricked jealousy. It is necessary, therefore, to be somewhat upon our guard in accepting his estimates of men and acts at this period; though the broad general impression to be gathered from his treatment of his rivals, even in these confidential pages, is favorable at least to his justice of disposition and honesty of intention.

At the outset Mr. Clay excited Mr. Adams's most lively resentment. The policy which seemed most promising to that gentleman lay in antagonism to the Administration, whereas, in the absence of substantial party issues, there seemed, at least to members of that Administration, to be no proper grounds for such antagonism. When, therefore, Mr. Clay found or devised such grounds, the President and his Cabinet, vexed and harassed by the opposition of so influential a man, not unnaturally attributed his tactics to selfish and, in a political sense, corrupt motives. Thus Mr. Adams stigmatized his opposition to the Florida treaty as prompted by no just objection to its stipulations, but by a malicious wish to bring discredit upon the negotiator. Probably the charge was true, and Mr. Clay's honesty in opposing an admirable treaty can only be vindicated at the expense of his understanding, — an explanation certainly not to be accepted. But when Mr. Adams attributed to

the same motive of embarrassing the Administration Mr. Clay's energetic endeavors to force a recognition of the insurgent states of South America, he exaggerated the inimical element in his rival's motives. It was the business of the President and Cabinet, and preëminently of the Secretary of State, to see to it that the country should not move too fast in this very nice and perilous matter of recognizing the independence of rebels. Mr. Adams was the responsible minister, and had to hold the reins; Mr. Clay, outside the official vehicle, cracked the lash probably a little more loudly than he would have done had he been on the coach-box. It may be assumed that in advocating his various motions looking to the appointment of ministers to the new states and to other acts of recognition, he felt his eloquence rather fired than dampened by the thought of how much trouble he was making for Mr. Adams; but that he was at the same time espousing the cause to which he sincerely wished well is probably true. His ardent temper was stirred by this struggle for independence, and his rhetorical nature could not resist the opportunities for fervid and brilliant oratory presented by this struggle for freedom against mediæval despotism. Real convictions were sometimes diluted with rodomontade, and a true feeling was to some extent stimulated by the desire to embarrass a rival.

Entire freedom from prejudice would have been too much to expect from Mr. Adams; but his criticisms of Clay are seldom marked by any serious accusations or really bitter explosions of ill-temper. Early in his term of office he writes that Mr. Clay has "already mounted his South American great horse," and that his "project is that in which John Randolph failed, to control or overthrow the Executive by swaying the House of Representatives." Again he says that "Clay is as rancorously benevolent as John Randolph." The sting of these remarks lay rather in the comparison with Randolph than in their direct allegations. In January, 1819, Adams notes that Clay has "redoubled his rancor against me," and gives himself "free swing to assault me . . . both in his public speeches and by secret machinations, without scruple or delicacy." The diarist gloomily adds, that "all public business in Congress now connects itself with intrigues, and there is great danger that the whole Government will degenerate into a struggle of cabals." He was rather inclined to such pessimistic vaticinations; but it must be confessed that he spoke with too much reason on this occasion. In the absence of a sufficient supply of important public questions to absorb the energies of the men in public life, the petty game of personal politics was playing with un-

usual zeal. As time went on, however, and the South American questions were removed from the arena, Adams's ill-feeling towards Clay became greatly mitigated. Clay's assaults and opposition also gradually dwindled away; go-betweens carried to and fro disclaimers, made by the principals, of personal ill-will towards each other; and before the time of election was actually imminent something as near the *entente cordiale* was established as could be reasonably expected to exist between competitors very unlike both in moral and mental constitution.[1]

Mr. Adams's unbounded indignation and profound contempt were reserved for Mr. Crawford, partly, it may be suspected by the cynically minded, because Crawford for a long time seemed to be by far the most formidable rival, but partly also because Crawford was in fact unable to resist the temptation to use ignoble means for attaining an end which he coveted too keenly for his own honor. It was only by degrees that Adams began to suspect the underhand methods and malicious practices of Crawford; but as conviction was gradually brought home to him his native tendency towards suspicion was enhanced to an extreme degree. He

[1] For a deliberate estimate of Clay's character see Mr. Adams's Diary, v. 325.

then came to recognize in Crawford a wholly selfish and scheming politician, who had the baseness to retain his seat in Mr. Monroe's Cabinet with the secret persistent object of giving the most fatal advice in his power. From that time forth he saw in every suggestion made by the Secretary of the Treasury only an insidious intent to lead the Administration, and especially the Department of State, into difficulty, failure, and disrepute. He notes, evidently with perfect belief, that for this purpose Crawford was even covertly busy with the Spanish ambassador to prevent an accommodation of our differences with Spain. "Oh, the windings of the human heart!" he exclaims; "possibly Crawford is not himself conscious of his real motives for this conduct." Even the slender measure of charity involved in this last sentence rapidly evaporated from the poisoned atmosphere of his mind. He mentions that Crawford has killed a man in a duel; that he leaves unanswered a pamphlet "supported by documents" exhibiting him "in the most odious light, as sacrificing every principle to his ambition." Because Calhoun would not support him for the Presidency, Crawford stimulated a series of attacks upon the War Department. He was the "instigator and animating spirit of the whole movement both in Congress and at Richmond against Jackson and the

Administration." He was "a worm preying upon the vitals of the Administration in its own body." He "solemnly deposed in a court of justice that which is not true," for the purpose of bringing discredit upon the testimony given by Mr. Adams in the same cause. But Mr. Adams says of this that he cannot bring himself to believe that Crawford has been guilty of wilful falsehood, though convicted of inaccuracy by his own words; for "ambition debauches memory itself." A little later he would have been less merciful. In some vexatious and difficult commercial negotiations which Mr. Adams was conducting with France, Crawford is "afraid of [the result] being too favorable."

To form a just opinion of the man thus unpleasantly sketched is difficult. For nearly eight years Mr. Adams was brought into close and constant relations with him, and as a result formed a very low opinion of his character and by no means a high estimate of his abilities. Even after making a liberal allowance for the prejudice naturally supervening from their rivalry there is left a residuum of condemnation abundantly sufficient to ruin a more vigorous reputation than Crawford has left behind him. Apparently Mr. Calhoun, though a fellow Southerner, thought no better of the ambitious Georgian than did Mr. Adams, to whom one

day he remarked that Crawford was "a very singular instance of a man of such character rising to the eminence he now occupies; that there has not been in the history of the Union another man with abilities so ordinary, with services so slender, and so thoroughly corrupt, who had contrived to make himself a candidate for the Presidency." Nor was this a solitary expression of the feelings of the distinguished South Carolinian.

Mr. E. H. Mills, Senator from Massachusetts, and a dispassionate observer, speaks of Crawford with scant favor as "coarse, rough, uneducated, of a pretty strong mind, a great intriguer, and determined to make himself President." He adds: "Adams, Jackson, and Calhoun all think well of each other, and are united at least in one thing, — to wit, a most thorough dread and abhorrence of Crawford."

Yet Crawford was for many years not only never without eager expectations of his own, which narrowly missed realization and might not have missed it had not his health broken down a few months too soon, but he had a large following, strong friends, and an extensive influence. But if he really had great ability he had not the good fortune of an opportunity to show it; and he lives in history rather as a man from whom much was expected than as a man

who achieved much. One faculty, however, not of the best, but serviceable, he had in a rare degree: he thoroughly understood all the artifices of politics; he knew how to interest and organize partisans, to obtain newspaper support, and generally to extend and direct his following after that fashion which soon afterward began to be fully developed by the younger school of our public men. He was the *avant courier* of a bad system, of which the first crude manifestations were received with well-merited disrelish by the worthier among his contemporaries.

It is the more easy to believe that Adams's distrust of Crawford was a sincere conviction, when we consider his behavior towards another dangerous rival, General Jackson. In view of the new phase which the relationship between these two men was soon to take on, Adams's hearty championship of Jackson for several years prior to 1825 deserves mention. The Secretary stood gallantly by the General at a crisis in Jackson's life when he greatly needed such strong official backing, and in an hour of extreme need Adams alone in the Cabinet of Monroe lent an assistance which Jackson afterwards too readily forgot. Seldom has a government been brought by the undue zeal of its servants into a quandary more perplexing than that into which the reckless military hero brought the

Administration of President Monroe. Turned loose in the regions of Florida, checked only by an uncertain and disputed boundary line running through half-explored forests, confronted by a hated foe whose strength he could well afford to despise, General Jackson, in a war properly waged only against Indians, ran a wild and lawless, but very vigorous and effective, career in Spanish possessions. He hung a couple of British subjects with as scant trial and meagre shrift as if he had been a mediæval free-lance; he marched upon Spanish towns and peremptorily forced the blue-blooded commanders to capitulate in the most humiliating manner; afterwards, when the Spanish territory had become American, in his civil capacity as Governor, he flung the Spanish Commissioner into jail. He treated instructions, laws, and established usages as teasing cobwebs which any spirited public servant was in duty bound to break; then he quietly stated his willingness to let the country take the benefit of his irregular proceedings and make him the scapegoat or martyr if such should be needed. How to treat this too successful chieftain was no simple problem. He had done what he ought not to have done, yet everybody in the country was heartily glad that he had done it. He ought not to have hung Arbuthnot and Ambrister, nor to have

seized Pensacola, nor later on to have imprisoned Callava; yet the general efficiency of his procedure fully accorded with the secret disposition of the country. It was, however, not easy to establish the propriety of his trenchant doings upon any acknowledged principles of law, and during the long period through which these disturbing feats extended, Jackson was left in painful solitude by those who felt obliged to judge his actions by rule rather than by sympathy. The President was concerned lest his Administration should be brought into indefensible embarrassment; Calhoun was personally displeased because the instructions issued from his department had been exceeded; Crawford eagerly sought to make the most of such admirable opportunities for destroying the prestige of one who might grow into a dangerous rival; Clay, who hated a military hero, indulged in a series of fierce denunciations in the House of Representatives; Mr. Adams alone stood gallantly by the man who had dared to take vigorous measures upon his own sole responsibility. His career touched a kindred chord in Adams's own independent and courageous character, and perhaps for the only time in his life the Secretary of State became almost sophistical in the arguments by which he endeavored to sustain the impetuous warrior against an adverse Cab-

inet. The authority given to Jackson to cross the Spanish frontier in pursuit of the Indian enemy was justified as being only defensive warfare; then "all the rest," argued Adams, "even to the order for taking the Fort of Barrancas by storm, was incidental, deriving its character from the object, which was not hostility to Spain, but the termination of the Indian war." Through long and anxious sessions Adams stood fast in opposing "the unanimous opinions" of the President, Crawford, Calhoun, and Wirt. Their policy seemed to him a little ignoble and wholly blundering, because, he said, "it is weakness and a confession of weakness. The disclaimer of power in the Executive is of dangerous example and of evil consequences. There is injustice to the officer in disavowing him, when in principle he is strictly justifiable." This behavior upon Mr. Adams's part was the more generous and disinterested because the earlier among these doings of Jackson incensed Don Onis extremely and were near bringing about the entire disruption of that important negotiation with Spain upon which Mr. Adams had so much at stake. But few civilians have had a stronger dash of the fighting element than had Mr. Adams, and this impelled him irresistibly to stand shoulder to shoulder with Jackson in such an emergency, regardless of possible con-

sequences to himself. He preferred to insist that the hanging of Arbuthnot and Ambrister was according to the laws of war and to maintain that position in the teeth of Stratford Canning rather than to disavow it and render apology and reparation. So three years later when Jackson was again in trouble by reason of his arrest of Callava, he still found a stanch advocate in Adams, who, having made an argument for the defence which would have done credit to a subtle-minded barrister, concluded by adopting the sentiment of Hume concerning the execution of Don Pantaleon de Sa by Oliver Cromwell, — if the laws of nations had been violated, "it was by a signal act of justice deserving universal approbation." Later still, on January 8, 1824, being the anniversary of the victory of New Orleans, as if to make a conspicuous declaration of his opinions in favor of Jackson, Mr. Adams gave a great ball in his honor, "at which about one thousand persons attended."[1]

[1] Senator Mills says of this grand ball: "Eight large rooms were open and literally filled to overflowing. There must have been at least a thousand people there; and so far as Mr. Adams was concerned it certainly evinced a great deal of taste, elegance, and good sense. . . . Many stayed till twelve and one. . . . It is the universal opinion that nothing has ever equalled this party here either in brilliancy of preparation or elegance of the company."

He was in favor of offering to the General the position of minister to Mexico; and before Jackson had developed into a rival of himself for the Presidency, he exerted himself to secure the Vice-Presidency for him. Thus by argument and by influence in the Cabinet, in many a private interview, and in the world of society, also by wise counsel when occasion offered, Mr. Adams for many years made himself the noteworthy and indeed the only powerful friend of General Jackson. Nor up to the last moment, and when Jackson had become his most dangerous competitor, is there any derogatory passage concerning him in the Diary.

As the period of election drew nigh, interest in it absorbed everything else; indeed during the last year of Monroe's Administration public affairs were so quiescent and the public business so seldom transcended the simplest routine, that there was little else than the next Presidency to be thought or talked of. The rivalship for this, as has been said, was based not upon conflicting theories concerning public affairs, but solely upon individual preference for one or another of four men no one of whom at that moment represented any great principle in antagonism to any of the others. Under no circumstances could the temptation to petty intrigue and malicious tale-bearing be greater than when votes

were to be gained or lost solely by personal predilection. In such a contest Adams was severely handicapped as against the showy prestige of the victorious soldier, the popularity of the brilliant orator, and the artfulness of the most dexterous political manager then in public life. Long prior to this stage Adams had established his rule of conduct in the campaign. So early as March, 1818, he was asked one day by Mr. Everett whether he was "determined to do nothing with a view to promote his future election to the Presidency as the successor of Mr. Monroe," and he had replied that he "should do absolutely nothing." To this resolution he sturdily adhered. Not a breach of it was ever brought home to him, or indeed — save in one instance soon to be noticed — seriously charged against him. There is not in the Diary the faintest trace of any act which might be so much as questionable or susceptible of defence only by casuistry. That he should have perpetuated evidence of any flagrant misdoing certainly could not be expected; but in a record kept with the fulness and frankness of this Diary we should read between the lines and detect as it were in its general flavor any taint of disingenuousness or concealment; we should discern moral unwholesomeness in its atmosphere. A thoughtless sentence would slip from the pen,

a sophistical argument would be formulated for self-comfort, some acquaintance, interview, or arrangement would slide upon some unguarded page indicative of undisclosed matters. But there is absolutely nothing of this sort. There is no tinge of bad color; all is clear as crystal. Not an editor, nor a member of Congress, nor a local politician, not even a private individual, was intimidated or conciliated. On the contrary it often happened that those who made advances, at least sometimes stimulated by honest friendship, got rebuffs instead of encouragement. Even after the contest was known to have been transferred to the House of Representatives, when Washington was actually buzzing with the ceaseless whisperings of many secret conclaves, when the air was thick with rumors of what this one had said and that one had done, when, as Webster said, there were those who pretended to foretell how a representative would vote from the way in which he put on his hat, when of course stories of intrigue and corruption poisoned the honest breeze, and when the streets seemed traversed only by the busy tread of the go-betweens, the influential friends, the wire-pullers of the various contestants, — still amid all this noisy excitement and extreme temptation Mr. Adams held himself almost wholly aloof, wrapped in the

cloak of his rigid integrity. His proud honesty was only not quite repellent; he sometimes allowed himself to answer questions courteously, and for a brief period held in check his strong natural propensity to give offence and make enemies. This was the uttermost length that he could go towards political corruption. He became for a few weeks tolerably civil of speech, which after all was much for him to do and doubtless cost him no insignificant effort. Since the days of Washington he alone presents the singular spectacle of a candidate for the Presidency deliberately taking the position, and in a long campaign really never flinching from it: "that, if the people wish me to be President I shall not refuse the office; but I ask nothing from any man or from any body of men."

Yet though he declined to be a courtier of popular favor he did not conceal from himself or from others the chagrin which he would feel if there should be a manifestation of popular disfavor. Before the popular election he stated that if it should go against him he should construe it as the verdict of the people that they were dissatisfied with his services as a public man, and he should then retire to private life, no longer expecting or accepting public functions. He did not regard politics as a struggle

in which, if he should now be beaten in one encounter, he would return to another in the hope of better success in time. His notion was that the people had had ample opportunity during his incumbency in appointive offices to measure his ability and understand his character, and that the action of the people in electing or not electing him to the Presidency would be an indication that they were satisfied or dissatisfied with him. In the latter event he had nothing more to seek. Politics did not constitute a profession or career in which he felt entitled to persist in seeking personal success as he might in the law or in business. Neither did the circumstances of the time place him in the position of an advocate of any great principle which he might feel it his duty to represent and to fight for against any number of reverses. No such element was present at this time in national affairs. He construed the question before the people simply as concerning their opinion of him. He was much too proud to solicit and much too honest to scheme for a favorable expression. It was a singular and a lofty attitude even if a trifle egotistical and not altogether unimpeachable by argument. It could not diminish but rather it intensified his interest in a contest which he chose to regard not simply as

a struggle for a glittering prize but as a judgment upon the services which he had been for a lifetime rendering to his countrymen.

How profoundly his whole nature was moved by the position in which he stood is evident, often almost painfully, in the Diary. Any attempt to conceal his feeling would be idle, and he makes no such attempt. He repeats all the rumors which come to his ears; he tells the stories about Crawford's illness; he records his own temptations; he tries hard to nerve himself to bear defeat philosophically by constantly predicting it; indeed, he photographs his whole existence for many weeks; and however eagerly any person may aspire to the Presidency of the United States there is little in the picture to make one long for the preliminary position of candidate for that honor. It is too much like the stake and the flames through which the martyr passed to eternal beatitude, with the difference as against the candidate that he has by no means the martyr's certainty of reward.

In those days of slow communication it was not until December, 1824, that it became everywhere known that there had been no election of a president by the people. When the Electoral College met the result of their ballots was as follows: —

General Jackson led with . .	99 votes.
Adams followed with	84 "
Crawford had	41 "
Clay had	37 "
Total	261 votes.

Mr. Calhoun was elected Vice-President by the handsome number of 182 votes.

This condition of the election had been quite generally anticipated; yet Mr. Adams's friends were not without some feeling of disappointment. They had expected for him a fair support at the South, whereas he in fact received seventy-seven out of his eighty-four votes from New York and New England; Maryland gave him three, Louisiana gave him two, Delaware and Illinois gave him one each.

When the electoral body was known to be reduced within the narrow limits of the House of Representatives, intrigue was rather stimulated than diminished by the definiteness which became possible for it. Mr. Clay, who could not come before the House, found himself transmuted from a candidate to a President-maker; for it was admitted by all that his great personal influence in Congress would almost undoubtedly confer success upon the aspirant whom he should favor. Apparently his predilections were at least possibly in favor of Craw-

ford; but Crawford's health had been for many months very bad; he had had a severe paralytic stroke, and when acting as Secretary of the Treasury he had been unable to sign his name, so that a stamp or die had been used; his speech was scarcely intelligible; and when Mr. Clay visited him in the retirement in which his friends now kept him, the fact could not be concealed that he was for the time at least a wreck. Mr. Clay therefore had to decide for himself, his followers, and the country whether Mr. Adams or General Jackson should be the next President of the United States. A cruel attempt was made in this crisis either to destroy his influence by blackening his character, or to intimidate him, through fear of losing his reputation for integrity, into voting for Jackson. An anonymous letter charged that the friends of Clay had hinted that, "like the Swiss, they would fight for those who pay best;" that they had offered to elect Jackson if he would agree to make Clay Secretary of State, and that upon his indignant refusal to make such a bargain the same proposition had been made to Mr. Adams, who was found less scrupulous and had promptly formed the "unholy coalition." This wretched publication, made a few days before the election in the House, was traced to a dull-witted Pennsylvania Representative by the

name of Kremer, who had obviously been used as a tool by cleverer men. It met, however, the fate which seems happily always to attend such ignoble devices, and failed utterly of any more important effect than the utter annihilation of Kremer. In truth, General Jackson's fate had been sealed from the instant when it had fallen into Mr. Clay's hands. Clay had long since expressed his unfavorable opinion of the "military hero," in terms too decisive to admit of explanation or retraction. Without much real liking for Adams, Clay at least disliked him much less than he did Jackson, and certainly his honest judgment favored the civilian far more than the disorderly soldier whose lawless career in Florida had been the topic of some of the great orator's fiercest invective. The arguments founded on personal fitness were strongly upon the side of Adams, and other arguments advanced by the Jacksonians could hardly deceive Clay. They insisted that their candidate was the choice of the people so far as a superiority of preference had been indicated, and that therefore he ought to be also the choice of the House of Representatives. It would be against the spirit of the Constitution and a thwarting of the popular will, they said, to prefer either of his competitors. The fallacy of this reasoning, if reasoning it could be called, was glaring. If

the spirit of the Constitution required the House of Representatives not to *elect* from three candidates before it, but only to induct an individual into the Presidency by a process which was in form voting but in fact only a simple certification that he had received the highest number of electoral votes, it would have been a plain and easy matter for the letter of the Constitution to have expressed this spirit, or indeed to have done away altogether with this machinery of a sham election. The Jackson men had only to state their argument in order to expose its hollowness; for they said substantially that the Constitution established an election without an option; that the electors were to vote for a person predestined by an earlier occurrence to receive their ballots. But besides their unsoundness in argument, their statistical position was far from being what they undertook to represent it. The popular vote had been so light that it really looked as though the people had cared very little which candidate should succeed; and to talk about a manifestation of the *popular will* was absurd, for the only real manifestation had been of popular indifference. For example, in 1823 Massachusetts had cast upwards of 66,000 votes in the state election, whereas in this national election she cast only a trifle more than 37,000. Vir-

ginia distributed a total of less than 15,000 among all four candidates. Pluralities did not signify much in such a condition of sentiment as was indicated by these figures. Moreover, in six States, viz., Vermont, New York, Delaware, South Carolina, Georgia, Louisiana, the electors were chosen by the legislatures, not by the people; so that there was no correct way of counting them at all in a discussion of pluralities. Guesses and approximations favored Adams, and to an important degree; for these six States gave to Adams thirty-six votes, to Jackson nineteen, to Crawford six, to Clay four. In New York, Jackson had hardly an appreciable following. Moreover, in other States many thousands of votes which had been "cast for no candidate in particular, but in opposition to the caucus ticket generally," were reckoned as if they had been cast for Jackson or against Adams, as suited the especial case. Undoubtedly Jackson did have a plurality, but undoubtedly it fell very far short of the imposing figure, nearly 48,000, which his supporters had the audacity to name.

The election took place in the House on February 9, 1825. Daniel Webster and John Randolph were tellers, and they reported that there were "for John Quincy Adams, of Massachusetts, thirteen votes; for Andrew Jackson, of Tennessee, seven votes; for William H. Craw-

ford, of Georgia, four votes." Thereupon the speaker announced Mr. Adams to have been elected President of the United States.

This end of an unusually exciting contest thus left Mr. Adams in possession of the field, Mr. Crawford the victim of an irretrievable defeat, Mr. Clay still hopeful and aspiring for a future which had only disappointment in store for him, General Jackson enraged and revengeful. Not even Mr. Adams was fully satisfied. When the committee waited upon him to inform him of the election, he referred in his reply to the peculiar state of things and said, "could my refusal to accept the trust thus delegated to me give an opportunity to the people to form and to express with a nearer approach to unanimity the object of their preference, I should not hesitate to decline the acceptance of this eminent charge and to submit the decision of this momentous question again to their decision." That this singular and striking statement was made in good faith is highly probable. William H. Seward says that it was "unquestionably uttered with great sincerity of heart." The test of action of course could not be applied, since the resignation of Mr. Adams would only have made Mr. Calhoun President, and could not have been so arranged as to bring about a new election. Otherwise the course of

his argument would have been clear; the fact that such action involved an enormous sacrifice would have been to his mind strong evidence that it was a duty; and the temptation to perform a duty, always strong with him, became ungovernable if the duty was exceptionally disagreeable. Under the circumstances, however, the only logical conclusion lay in the inauguration, which took place in the customary simple fashion on March 4, 1825. Mr. Adams, we are told, was dressed in a black suit, of which all the materials were wholly of American manufacture. Prominent among those who after the ceremony hastened to greet him and to shake hands with him appeared General Jackson. It was the last time that any friendly courtesy is recorded as having passed between the two.

Many men eminent in public affairs have had their best years embittered by their failure to secure the glittering prize of the Presidency. Mr. Adams is perhaps the only person to whom the gaining of that proud distinction has been in some measure a cause of chagrin. This strange sentiment, which he undoubtedly felt, was due to the fact that what he had wished was not the office in and for itself, but the office as a symbol or token of the popular approval. He had held important and responsible public

positions during substantially his whole active life; he was nearly sixty years old, and, as he said, he now for the first time had an opportunity to find out in what esteem the people of the country held him. What he wished was that the people should now express their decided satisfaction with him. This he hardly could be said to have obtained; though to be the choice of a plurality in the nation and then to be selected by so intelligent a body of constituents as the Representatives of the United States involved a peculiar sanction, yet nothing else could fully take the place of that national indorsement which he had coveted. When men publicly profess modest depreciation of their successes they are seldom believed; but in his private Diary Mr. Adams wrote, on December 31, 1825: —

"The year has been the most momentous of those that have passed over my head, inasmuch as it has witnessed my elevation at the age of fifty-eight to the Chief Magistracy of my country, to the summit of laudable or at least blameless worldly ambition; not however in a manner satisfactory to pride or to just desire; not by the unequivocal suffrages of a majority of the people; with perhaps two thirds of the whole people adverse to the actual result."

No President since Washington had ever come into office so entirely free from any man-

ner of personal obligations or partisan entanglements, express or implied, as did Mr. Adams. Throughout the campaign he had not himself, or by any agent, held out any manner of tacit inducement to any person whomsoever, contingent upon his election. He entered upon the Presidency under no indebtedness. He at once nominated his Cabinet as follows: Henry Clay, Secretary of State; Richard Rush, Secretary of the Treasury; James Barbour, Secretary of War; Samuel L. Southard, Secretary of the Navy; William Wirt, Attorney-General. The last two were renominations of the incumbents under Monroe. The entire absence of chicanery or the use of influence in the distribution of offices is well illustrated by the following incident: On the afternoon following the day of inauguration President Adams called upon Rufus King, whose term of service as Senator from New York had just expired, and who was preparing to leave Washington on the next day. In the course of a conversation concerning the nominations which had been sent to the Senate that forenoon the President said that he had nominated no minister to the English court, and

"asked Mr. King if he would accept that mission. His first and immediate impulse was to decline it. He said that his determination to retire from the public

service had been made up, and that this proposal was utterly unexpected to him. Of this I was aware; but I urged upon him a variety of considerations to induce his acceptance of it. . . . I dwelt with earnestness upon all these motives, and apparently not without effect. He admitted the force of them, and finally promised fully to consider of the proposal before giving me a definite answer."

The result was an acceptance by Mr. King, his nomination by the President, and confirmation by the Senate. He was an old Federalist, to whom Mr. Adams owed no favors. With such directness and simplicity were the affairs of the Republic conducted. It is a quaint and pleasing scene from the period of our forefathers: the President, without discussion of "claims" to a distinguished and favorite post, actually selects for it a member of a hostile political organization, an old man retiring from public life; then quietly walks over to his house, surprises him with the offer, and finding him reluctant urgently presses upon him arguments to induce his acceptance. But the whole business of office-seeking and office-distributing, now so overshadowing, had no place under Mr. Adams. On March 5 he sent in several nominations which were nearly all of previous incumbents. "Efforts had been made," he writes, "by some of the senators to obtain

different nominations, and to introduce a principle of change or rotation in office at the expiration of these commissions, which would make the Government a perpetual and unintermitting scramble for office. A more pernicious expedient could scarcely have been devised. . . . I determined to renominate every person against whom there was no complaint which would have warranted his removal." A notable instance was that of Sterret, naval officer at New Orleans, "a noisy and clamorous reviler of the Administration," and lately busy in a project for insulting a Louisiana Representative who had voted for Mr. Adams. Secretary Clay was urgent for the removal of this man, plausibly saying that in the cases of persons holding office at the pleasure of the Administration the proper course was to avoid on the one hand political persecution, and on the other any appearance of pusillanimity. Mr. Adams replied that if Sterret had been actually engaged in insulting a representative for the honest and independent discharge of duty, he would make the removal at once. But the design had not been consummated, and an *intention* never carried into effect would scarcely justify removal.

"Besides [he added], should I remove this man for this cause it must be upon some fixed principle, which would apply to others as well as to him. And

where was it possible to draw the line? Of the custom-house officers throughout the Union, four fifths in all probability were opposed to my election. Crawford, Secretary of the Treasury, had distributed these positions among his own supporters. I had been urged very earnestly and from various quarters to sweep away my opponents and provide with their places for my friends. I can justify the refusal to adopt this policy only by the steadiness and consistency of my adhesion to my own. If I depart from this in one instance I shall be called upon by my friends to do the same in many. An invidious and inquisitorial scrutiny into the personal dispositions of public officers will creep through the whole Union, and the most selfish and sordid passions will be kindled into activity to distort the conduct and misrepresent the feelings of men whose places may become the prize of slander upon them."

Mr. Clay was silenced, and Sterret retained his position, constituting thereafter only a somewhat striking instance among many to show that nothing was to be lost by political opposition to Mr. Adams.

It was a cruel and discouraging fatality which brought about that a man so suicidally upright in the matter of patronage should find that the bitterest abuse which was heaped upon him was founded in an allegation of corruption of precisely this nature. When before the election the ignoble George Kremer anonymously charged

that Mr. Clay had sold his friends in the House of Representatives to Mr. Adams, "as the planter does his negroes or the farmer his team and horses;" when Mr. Clay promptly published the unknown writer as "a base and infamous calumniator, a dastard and a liar;" when next Kremer, being unmasked, avowed that he would make good his charges, but immediately afterward actually refused to appear or testify before a Committee of the House instructed to investigate the matter, it was supposed by all reasonable observers that the outrageous accusation was forever laid at rest. But this was by no means the case. The author of the slander had been personally discredited; but the slander itself had not been destroyed. So shrewdly had its devisers who saw future usefulness in it managed the matter, that while Kremer slunk away into obscurity, the story which he had told remained an assertion denied, but not disproved, still open to be believed by suspicious or willing friends. With Adams President and Clay Secretary of State and General Jackson nominated, as he quickly was by the Tennessee Legislature, as a candidate for the next Presidential term, the accusation was too plausible and too tempting to be allowed to fall forever into dusty death; rather it was speedily exhumed from its shallow burial and galvanized

into new life. The partisans of General Jackson sent it to and fro throughout the land. No denial, no argument, could kill it. It began to gain that sort of half belief which is certain to result from constant repetition; since many minds are so constituted that truth may be actually, as it were, manufactured for them by ceaseless iteration of statement, the many hearings gaining the character of evidence.

It is long since all students of American history, no matter what are their prejudices, or in whose interest their researches are prosecuted, have branded this accusation as devoid of even the most shadowy basis of probability, and it now gains no more credit than would a story that Adams, Clay, and Jackson had conspired together to get Crawford out of their way by assassination, and that his paralysis was the result of the drugs and potions administered in performance of this foul plot. But for a while the rumor stalked abroad among the people, and many conspicuously bowed down before it because it served their purpose, and too many others also, it must be confessed, did likewise because they were deceived and really believed it. Even the legislature of Tennessee were not ashamed to give formal countenance to a calumny in support of which not a particle of evidence had ever been adduced. In a preamble

to certain resolutions passed by this body upon this subject in 1827, it was recited that: "Mr. Adams desired the office of President; he went into the combination without it, and came out with it. Mr. Clay desired that of Secretary of State; he went into the combination without it, and came out with it." No other charge could have wounded Mr. Adams so keenly; yet no course was open to him for refuting the slander. Mr. Clay, beside himself with a just rage, was better able to fight after the fashion of the day — if indeed he could only find somebody to fight. This he did at last in the person of John Randolph, of Roanoke, who adverted in one of his rambling and vituperative harangues to "the coalition of Blifil and Black George — the combination unheard of till then of the Puritan and the black-leg." This language led naturally enough to a challenge from Mr. Clay. The parties met[1] and exchanged shots without result. The pistols were a second time loaded; Clay fired; Randolph fired into the air, walked up to Clay and without a word gave him his hand, which Clay had as it were perforce to take. There was no injury done save to the skirts of Randolph's long flannel coat which were pierced by one of the bullets.

By way of revenge a duel may be effective if

[1] April 8, 1826.

the wrong man does not happen to get shot; but as evidence for intelligent men a bloodier ending than this would have been inconclusive. It so happened, however, that Jackson, altogether contrary to his own purpose, brought conclusive aid to President Adams and Secretary Clay. Whether the General ever had any real faith in the charge can only be surmised. Not improbably he did, for his mental workings were so peculiar in their violence and prejudice that apparently he always sincerely believed all persons who crossed his path to be knaves and villains of the blackest dye. But certain it is that whether he credited the tale or not he soon began to devote himself with all his wonted vigor and pertinacity to its wide dissemination. Whether in so doing he was stupidly believing a lie, or intentionally spreading a known slander, is a problem upon which his friends and biographers have exhausted much ingenuity without reaching any certain result. But sure it is that early in the year 1827 he was so far carried beyond the bounds of prudence as to declare before many persons that he had proof of the corrupt bargain. The assertion was promptly sent to the newspapers by a Mr. Carter Beverly, one of those who heard it made in the presence of several guests at the Hermitage. The name of Mr. Beverly, at first concealed,

soon became known, and he was of course compelled to vouch in his principal. General Jackson never deserted his adherents, whether their difficulties were noble or ignoble. He came gallantly to the aid of Mr. Beverly, and in a letter of June 6 declared that early in January, 1825, he had been visited by a "member of Congress of high respectability," who had told him of "a great intrigue going on" of which he ought to be informed. This gentleman had then proceeded to explain that Mr. Clay's friends were afraid that if General Jackson should be elected President, "Mr. Adams would be continued Secretary of State (innuendo, there would be no room for Kentucky); that if I would say, or permit any of my confidential friends to say, that in case I were elected President, Mr. Adams should not be continued Secretary of State, by a complete union of Mr. Clay and his friends they would put an end to the Presidential contest in one hour. And he was of opinion it was right to fight such intriguers with their own weapons." This scarcely disguised suggestion of bargain and corruption the General said that he repudiated indignantly. Clay at once publicly challenged Jackson to produce some evidence — to name the "respectable" member of Congress who appeared in the very unrespectable light

of advising a candidate for the Presidency to emulate the alleged baseness of his opponents. Jackson thereupon uncovered James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania. Mr. Buchanan was a friend of the General, and to what point it may have been expected or hoped that his allegiance would carry him in support of his chief in this dire hour of extremity is matter only of inference. Fortunately, however, his fealty does not appear to have led him any great distance from the truth. He yielded to the prevailing desire to pass along the responsibility to some one else so far as to try to bring in a Mr. Markley, who, however, never became more than a dumb figure in the drama in which Buchanan was obliged to remain as the last important character. With obvious reluctance this gentleman then wrote that if General Jackson had placed any such construction as the foregoing upon an interview which had occurred between them, and which he recited at length, then the General had totally misconstrued — as was evident enough — what he, Mr. Buchanan, had said. Indeed, that Jackson could have supposed him to entertain the sentiments imputed to him made Mr. Buchanan, as he said, "exceedingly unhappy." In other words, there was no foundation whatsoever for the charge thus traced back to an originator who denied having

originated it and said that it was all a mistake. General Jackson was left to be defended from the accusation of deliberate falsehood only by the charitable suggestion that he had been unable to understand a perfectly simple conversation. Apparently Mr. Adams and Mr. Clay ought now to be abundantly satisfied, since not only were they amply vindicated, but their chief vilifier seemed to have been pierced by the point which he had sharpened for them. They had yet, however, to learn what vitality there is in falsehood.

General Jackson and his friends had alone played any active part in this matter. Of these friends Mr. Kremer had written a letter of retraction and apology which he was with difficulty prevented from publishing ; Mr. Buchanan had denied all that he had been summoned to prove ; a few years later Mr. Beverly wrote and sent to Mr. Clay a contrite letter of regret. General Jackson alone remained for the rest of his life unsilenced, obstinately reiterating a charge disproved by his own witnesses. But worse than all this, accumulations of evidence long and laboriously sought in many quarters have established a tolerably strong probability that advances of precisely the character alleged against Mr. Adams's friends were made to Mr. Clay by the most intimate personal associates

of General Jackson. The discussion of this unpleasant suspicion would not, however, be an excusable episode in this short volume. The reader who is curious to pursue the matter further will find all the documentary evidence collected in its original shape in the first volume of Colton's "Life of Clay," accompanied by an argument needlessly elaborate and surcharged with feeling yet in the main sufficiently fair and exhaustive.

Mr. Benton says that "no President could have commenced his administration under more unfavorable auspices, or with less expectation of a popular career," than did Mr. Adams. From the first a strong minority in the House of Representatives was hostile to him, and the next election made this a majority. The first indication of the shape which the opposition was to take became visible in the vote in the Senate upon confirming Mr. Clay as Secretary of State. There were fourteen nays against twenty-seven yeas, and an inspection of the list showed that the South was beginning to consolidate more closely than heretofore as a sectional force in politics. The formation of a Southern party distinctly organized in the interests of slavery, already apparent in the unanimity of the Southern Electoral Colleges against Mr. Adams, thus received further illus-

tration; and the skilled eye of the President noted "the rallying of the South and of Southern interests and prejudices to the men of the South." It is possible now to see plainly that Mr. Adams was really the first leader in the long crusade against slavery; it was in opposition to him that the South became a political unit; and a true instinct taught him the trend of Southern politics long before the Northern statesmen apprehended it, perhaps before even any Southern statesman had distinctly formulated it. This new development in the politics of the country soon received further illustration. The first message which Mr. Adams had occasion to send to Congress gave another opportunity to his ill-wishers. Therein he stated that the invitation which had been extended to the United States to be represented at the Congress of Panama had been accepted, and that he should commission ministers to attend the meeting. Neither in matter nor in manner did this proposition contain any just element of offence. It was customary for the Executive to initiate new missions simply by the nomination of envoys to fill them; and in such case the Senate, if it did not think the suggested mission desirable, could simply decline to confirm the nomination upon that ground. An example of this has been already seen in the two nominations of Mr.

Adams himself to the Court of Russia in the Presidency of Mr. Madison. But now vehement assaults were made upon the President, alike in the Senate and in the House, on the utterly absurd ground that he had transcended his powers. Incredible, too, as it may seem at this day it was actually maintained that there was no occasion whatsoever for the United States to desire representation at such a gathering. Prolonged and bitter was the opposition which the Administration was compelled to encounter in a measure to which there so obviously ought to have been instant assent if considered solely upon its intrinsic merits, but upon which nevertheless the discussion actually overshadowed all other questions which arose during the session. The President had the good fortune to find the powerful aid of Mr. Webster enlisted in his behalf, and ultimately he prevailed; but it was of ill augury at this early date to see that personal hostility was so widespread and so rancorous that it could make such a prolonged and desperate resistance with only the faintest pretext of right as a basis for its action. Yet a great and fundamental cause of the feeling manifested lay hidden away beneath the surface in the instinctive antipathy of the slaveholders to Mr. Adams and all his thoughts, his ways, and his doings. For into this ques-

tion of countenancing the Panama Congress, slavery and "the South" entered and imported into a portion of the opposition a certain element of reasonableness and propriety in a political sense. When we see the Southern statesmen banded against President Adams in these debates, as we know the future which was hidden from them, it almost makes us believe that their vindictiveness was justified by an instinctive forecasting of his character and his mission in life, and that without knowing it they already felt the influence of the acts which he was yet to do against them. For the South, without present dread of an abolition movement, yet hated this Panama Congress with a contemptuous loathing not alone because the South American states had freed all slaves within their limits, but because there was actually a fair chance that Hayti would be admitted to representation at the sessions as a sovereign state. That the President of the United States should propose to send white citizens of that country to sit cheek by jowl on terms of official equality with the revolted blacks of Hayti fired the Southern heart with rage inexpressible. The proposition was a further infusion of cement to aid in the Southern consolidation so rapidly going forward, and was substantially the beginning of the sense of personal aliena-

tion henceforth to grow steadily more bitter on the part of the slaveholders towards Mr. Adams. Without designing it he had struck the first blow in a fight which was to absorb his energies for the rest of his life.

Such evil forebodings as might too easily be drawn from the course of this debate were soon and amply fulfilled. The opposition increased rapidly until when Congress came together in December, 1827, it had attained overshadowing proportions. Not only was a member of that party elected Speaker of the House of Representatives, but a decided majority of both Houses of Congress was arrayed against the Administration — "a state of things which had never before occurred under the Government of the United States." All the committees too were composed of four opposition and only three Administration members. With more exciting issues this relationship of the executive and legislative departments might have resulted in dangerous collisions; but in this season of political quietude it only made the position of the President extremely uncomfortable. Mr. Van Buren soon became recognized as the formidable leader and organizer of the Jackson forces. His capacity as a political strategist was so far in advance of that of any other man of those times that it might have secured success even

had he been encountered by tactics similar to his own. But since on the contrary he had only to meet straightforward simplicity, it was soon apparent that he would have everything his own way. It was disciplined troops against the militia of honest merchants and farmers; and the result was not to be doubted. Mr. Adams and his friends were fond of comparing Van Buren with Aaron Burr, though predicting that he would be too shrewd to repeat Burr's blunders. From the beginning they declined to meet with his own weapons a man whom they so contemned. It was about this time that a new nomenclature of parties was introduced into our politics. The administrationists called themselves National Republicans, a name which in a few years was changed for that of Whigs, while the opposition or Jacksonians were known as Democrats, a title which has been ever since retained by the same party.

The story of Mr. Adams's Administration will detain the historian, and even the biographer, only a very short time. Not an event occurred during those four years which appears of any especial moment. Our foreign relations were all pacific; and no grave crisis or great issue was developed in domestic affairs. It was a period of tranquillity, in which the nation advanced rapidly in prosperity. For many years dulness

had reigned in business, but returning activity was encouraged by the policy of the new Government, and upon all sides various industries became active and thriving. So far as the rule of Mr. Adams was marked by any distinguishing characteristic, it was by a care for the material welfare of the people. More commercial treaties were negotiated during his Administration than in the thirty-six years preceding his inauguration. He was a strenuous advocate of internal improvements, and happily the condition of the national finances enabled the Government to embark in enterprises of this kind. He suggested many more than were undertaken, but not perhaps more than it would have been quite possible to carry out. He was always chary of making a show of himself before the people for the sake of gaining popularity. When invited to attend the annual exhibition of the Maryland Agricultural Society, shortly after his inauguration, he declined, and wrote in his Diary: "To gratify this wish I must give four days of my time, no trifle of expense, and set a precedent for being claimed as an article of exhibition at all the cattle-shows throughout the Union." Other gatherings would prefer equally reasonable demands, in responding to which "some duty must be neglected." But the opening of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal was an

event sufficiently momentous and national in its character to justify the President's attendance. He was requested in the presence of a great concourse of people to dig the first shovelful of earth and to make a brief address. The speech-making was easy; but when the digging was to be done he encountered some unexpected obstacle and the soil did not yield to his repeated efforts. Not to be defeated, however, he stripped off his coat, went to work in earnest with the spade and raised the earth successfully. Naturally such readiness was hailed with loud applause and pleased the great crowd who saw it. But in Mr. Adams's career it was an exceptional occurrence that enabled him to conciliate a momentary popularity; it was seldom that he enjoyed or used an opportunity of gaining the cheap admiration or shallow friendship of the multitude.

At least one moral to be drawn from the story of Mr. Adams's Presidency perhaps deserves rather to be called an *immoral*, and certainly furnishes unwelcome support to those persons who believe that conscientiousness is out of place in politics. It has been said that no sooner was General Jackson fairly defeated than he was again before the people as a candidate for the next election. An opposition to the new Administration was in process of formation actually before there had been time for that Administra-

tion to declare, much less to carry out, any policy or even any measure. The opposition was therefore not one of principle; it was not dislike of anything done or to be done; it did not pretend to have a purpose of saving the people from blunders or of offering them greater advantages. It was simply an opposition, or more properly an hostility, to the President and his Cabinet, and was conducted by persons who wished in as short a time as possible themselves to control and fill those positions. The sole ground upon which these opponents stood was, that they would rather have General Jackson at the head of affairs than Mr. Adams. The issue was purely personal; it was so when the opposition first developed, and it remained so until that opposition triumphed.

Under no circumstances can it be more excusable for an elective magistrate to seek personal good will towards himself than when his rival seeks to supplant him simply on the basis of enjoying a greater measure of such good will. Had any important question of policy been dividing the people, it would have been easy for a man of less moral courage and independence than belonged to Mr. Adams to select the side which he thought right, and to await the outcome at least with constancy. But the only real question raised was this: will Mr. Adams or Gen-

eral Jackson — two individuals representing as yet no antagonistic policies — be preferred by the greater number of voters in 1829? If, however, there was no great apparent issue open between these two men, at least there was a very wide difference between their characters, a point of some consequence in a wholly personal competition. It is easy enough now to see how this gaping difference displayed itself from the beginning, and how the advantage for winning was throughout wholly on the side of Jackson. The course to be pursued by Mr. Adams in order to insure victory was obvious enough; being simply to secure the largest following and most efficient support possible. The arts by which these objects were to be attained were not obscure nor beyond his power. If he wished a second term, as beyond question he did, two methods were of certain utility. He should make the support of his Administration a source of profit to the supporters; and he should conciliate good will by every means that offered. To the former end what more efficient means could be devised than a body of office-holders owing their positions to his appointment and likely to have the same term of office as himself? His neglect to create such a corps of stanch supporters cannot be explained on the ground that so plain a scheme of perpetuating

power had not then been devised in the Republic. Mr. Jefferson had practised it, to an extent which now seems moderate, but which had been sufficiently extensive to deprive any successor of the honor of novelty in originating it. The times were ripe for it, and the nation would not have revolted at it, as was made apparent when General Jackson, succeeding Mr. Adams, at once carried out the system with a thoroughness that has never been surpassed, and with a success in achieving results so great that almost no politician has since failed to have recourse to the same practice. Suggestions and temptations, neither of which were wanting, were however alike thrown away upon Mr. Adams. Friendship or hostility to the President were the only two matters which were sure to have no effect whatsoever upon the fate of an incumbent or an aspirant. Scarcely any removals were made during his Administration, and every one of the few was based solely upon a proved unfitness of the official. As a consequence very few new appointments were made, and in every instance the appointee was, or was believed to be, the fittest man without regard to his political bias. This entire elimination of the question of party allegiance from every department of the public service was not a specious protestation, but an undeniable fact at which friends grum-

bled bitterly, and upon which foes counted often with an ungenerous but always with an implicit reliance. It was well known, for example, that in the Customs Department there were many more avowed opponents than supporters of the Administration. What was to be thought, the latter angrily asked, of a president who refused to make any distinction between the sheep and the goats? But while Mr. Adams, unmoved by argument, anger, or entreaty, thus alienated many and discouraged all, every one was made acquainted with the antipodal principles of his rival. The consequence was inevitable; many abandoned Adams from sheer irritation; multitudes became cool and indifferent concerning him; the great number of those whose political faith was so weak as to be at the ready command of their own interests, or the interests of a friend or relative, yielded to a pressure against which no counteracting force was employed. In a word, no one who had not a strong and independent personal conviction in behalf of Mr. Adams found the slightest inducement to belong to his party. It did not require much political sagacity to see that in quiet times, with no great issue visibly at stake, a following thus composed could not include a majority of the nation. It is true that in fact there was opening an issue as great as has ever been presented to the Ameri-

can people, — an issue between government conducted with a sole view to efficiency and honesty and government conducted very largely, if not exclusively, with a view to individual and party ascendency. The new system afterward inaugurated by General Jackson, directly opposite to that of Mr. Adams and presenting a contrast to it as wide as is to be found in history, makes this fact glaringly plain to us. But during the years of Mr. Adams's Administration it was dimly perceived only by a few. Only one side of the shield had then been shown. The people did not appreciate that Adams and Jackson were representatives of two conflicting principles of administration which went to the very basis of our system of government. Had the issue been as apparent and as well understood then as it is now, in retrospect, the decision of the nation might have been different. But unfortunately the voters only beheld two individuals pitted against each other for the popular suffrage, of whom one, a brilliant soldier, would stand by and reward his friends, and the other, an uninteresting civilian, ignored all distinction between friend and foe.

It was not alone in the refusal to use patronage that Mr. Adams's rigid conscientiousness showed itself. He was equally obstinate in declining ever to stretch a point however slightly

in order to win the favor of any body of the people whether large or small. He was warned that his extensive schemes for internal improvement would alienate especially the important State of Virginia. He could not of course be expected to change his policy out of respect to Virginian prejudices; but he was advised to mitigate his expression of that policy, and to some extent it was open to him to do so. But he would not; his utterances went the full length of his opinions, and he persistently urged upon Congress many plans which he approved, but which he could not have the faintest hopes of seeing adopted. The consequence was that he displeased Virginia. He notes the fact in the Diary in the tone of one who endures persecution for righteousness' sake, and who means to be very stubborn in his righteousness. Again it was suggested to him to embody in one of his messages "something soothing for South Carolina." But there stood upon the statute books of South Carolina an unconstitutional law which had greatly embarrassed the national government, and which that rebellious little State with characteristic contumaciousness would not repeal. Under such circumstances, said Mr. Adams, I have no "soothing" words for South Carolina.

It was not alone by what he did and by what

he would not do that Mr. Adams toiled to insure the election of General Jackson far more sedulously and efficiently than did the General himself or any of his partisans. In most cases it was probably the manner quite as much as the act which made Mr. Adams unpopular. In his anxiety to be upright he was undoubtedly prone to be needlessly disagreeable. His uncompromising temper put on an ungracious aspect. His conscientiousness wore the appearance of offensiveness. The Puritanism in his character was strongly tinged with that old New England notion that whatever is disagreeable is probably right, and that a painful refusal would lose half its merit in being expressed courteously; that a right action should never be done in a pleasing way; not only that no pill should be sugar-coated, but that the bitterest ingredient should be placed on the outside. In repudiating attractive vices the Puritans had rejected also those amenities which might have decently concealed or even mildly decorated the forbidding angularities of a naked Virtue which certainly did not imitate the form of any goddess who had ever before attracted followers. Mr. Adams was a complete and thorough Puritan, wonderfully little modified by times and circumstances. The ordinary arts of propitiation would have appeared to him only a feeble and

diluted form of dishonesty; while suavity and graciousness of demeanor would have seemed as unbecoming to this rigid official as love-making or wine-bibbing seem to a strait-laced parson. It was inevitable, therefore, that he should never avert by his words any ill-will naturally caused by his acts; that he should never soothe disappointment, or attract calculating selfishness. He was an adept in alienation, a novice in conciliation. His magnetism was negative. He made few friends; and had no interested following whatsoever. No one was enthusiastic on his behalf; no band worked for him with the ardor of personal devotion. His party was composed of those who had sufficient intelligence to appreciate his integrity and sufficient honesty to admire it. These persons respected him, and when election day came they would vote for him; but they did not canvass zealously in his behalf, nor do such service for him as a very different kind of feeling induced the Jackson men to do for their candidate.[1] The fervid laborers in pol-

[1] Mr. Mills, in writing of Mr. Adams's inauguration, expressed well what many felt. "This same President of ours is a man that I can never court nor be on very familiar terms with. There is a cold, repulsive atmosphere about him that is too chilling for my respiration, and I shall certainly keep at a distance from its influence. I wish him God-speed in his Administration, and am heartily disposed to lend him my feeble aid whenever he may need it in a correct course; but he can-

itics left Mr. Adams alone in his chilling respectability, and went over to a camp where all scruples were consumed in the glowing heat of a campaign conducted upon the single and simple principle of securing victory.

Mr. Adams's relations with the members of his Cabinet were friendly throughout his term. Men of their character and ability, brought into daily contact with him, could not fail to appreciate and admire the purity of his motives and the patriotism of his conduct; nor was he wanting in a measure of consideration and deference towards them perhaps somewhat greater than might have been expected from him, sometimes even carried to the point of yielding his

not expect me to become his warm and devoted partisan." A like sentiment was expressed also much more vigorously by Ezekiel Webster to Daniel Webster, in a letter of February 15, 1829. The writer there attributes the defeat of Mr. Adams to personal dislike to him. People, he said, "always supported his cause from a cold sense of duty," and "we soon satisfy ourselves that we have discharged our duty to the cause of any man when we do not entertain for him one personal kind feeling, nor cannot unless we disembowel ourselves like a trussed turkey of all that is human nature within us." With a candidate "of popular character, like Mr. Clay," the result would have been different. "The measures of his [Adams's] Administration were just and wise and every honest man should have supported them, but many honest men did not for the reason I have mentioned." — *Webster's Private Correspondence*, vol. i. p. 469.

opinion in matters of consequence. It was his wish that the unity of the body should remain unbroken during his four years of office, and the wish was very nearly realized. Unfortunately, however, in his last year it became necessary for him to fill the mission to England, and Governor Barbour was extremely anxious for the place. It was already apparent that the coming election was likely to result in the succession of Jackson, and Mr. Adams notes that Barbour's extreme desire to receive the appointment was due to his wish to find a good harbor ere the approaching storm should burst. The remark was made without anger, in the tone of a man who had seen enough of the world not to expect too much from any of his fellow men; and the appointment was made, somewhat to the chagrin of Webster and Rush, either one of whom would have gladly accepted it. The vacancy thus caused, the only one which arose during his term, was filled by General Peter B. Porter, a gentleman whom Mr. Adams selected not as his own choice, but out of respect to the wishes of the Cabinet, and in order to "terminate the Administration in harmony with itself." The only seriously unpleasant occurrence was the treachery of Postmaster-General McLean, who saw fit to profess extreme devotion to Mr. Adams while secretly aiding General Jackson.

His perfidy was not undetected, and great pressure was brought to bear on the President to remove him. Mr. Adams, however, refused to do so, and McLean had the satisfaction of stepping from his post under Mr. Adams into a judgeship conferred by General Jackson, having shown his impartiality and judicial turn of mind, it is to be supposed, by declaring his warm allegiance to each master in turn.

The picture of President Adams's daily life is striking in its simplicity and its laboriousness. This chief magistrate of a great nation was wont to rise before daybreak, often at four or five o'clock even in winter, not unfrequently to build and light his own fire, and to work hard for hours when most persons in busy life were still comfortably slumbering. The forenoon and afternoon he devoted to public affairs, and often he complains that the unbroken stream of visitors gives him little opportunity for hard or continuous labor. Such work he was compelled to do chiefly in the evening; and he did not always make up for early hours of rising by a correspondingly early bedtime; though sometimes in the summer we find him going to bed between eight and nine o'clock, an hour which probably few Presidents have kept since then. He strove to care for his health by daily exercise. In the morning he swam in the Potomac,

often for a long time; and more than once he encountered no small risk in this pastime. During the latter part of his Presidential term he tried riding on horseback. At times when the weather compelled him to walk, and business was pressing, he used to get his daily modicum of fresh air before the sun was up. A life of this kind with more of hardship than of relaxation in it was ill fitted to sustain in robust health a man sixty years of age, and it is not surprising that Mr. Adams often complained of feeling ill, dejected, and weary. Yet he never spared himself, nor apparently thought his habits too severe, and actually toward the close of his term he spoke of his trying daily routine as constituting a very agreeable life. He usually began the day by reading "two or three chapters in the Bible with Scott's and Hewlett's Commentaries," being always a profoundly religious man of the old-fashioned school then prevalent in New England.

It could hardly have added to the meagre comforts of such a life to be threatened with assassination. Yet this danger was thrust upon Mr. Adams's attention upon one occasion at least under circumstances which gave to it a very serious aspect. The tranquillity with which he went through the affair showed that his physical courage was as imperturbable as his

moral. The risk was protracted throughout a considerable period, but he never let it disturb the even tenor of his daily behavior or warp his actions in the slightest degree, save only that when he was twice or thrice brought face to face with the intending assassin he treated the fellow with somewhat more curt brusqueness than was his wont. But when the danger was over he bore his would-be murderer no malice, and long afterward actually did him a kindly service.

Few men in public life have been subjected to trials of temper so severe as vexed Mr. Adams during his Presidential term. To play an intensely exciting game strictly in accordance with rigid moral rules of the player's own arbitrary enforcement, and which are utterly repudiated by a less scrupulous antagonist, can hardly tend to promote contentment and amiability. Neither are slanders and falsehoods mollifying applications to a statesman inspired with an upright and noble ambition. Mr. Adams bore such assaults, ranging from the charge of having corruptly bought the Presidency down to that of being a Freemason with such grim stoicism as he could command. The disappearance and probable assassination of Morgan at this time led to a strong feeling throughout the country

against Freemasonry, and the Jackson men at once proclaimed abroad that Adams was one of the brotherhood, and offered, if he should deny it, to produce the records of the lodge to which he belonged. The allegation was false; he was not a Mason, and his friends urged him to say so publicly; but he replied bitterly that his denial would probably at once be met by a complete set of forged records of a fictitious lodge, and the people would not know whom to believe. Next he was said to have bargained for the support of Daniel Webster, by promising to distribute offices to Federalists. This accusation was a cruel perversion of his very virtues; for its only foundation lay in the fact that in the venturesome but honorable attempt to be President of a nation rather than of a party, he had in some instances given offices to old Federalists, certainly with no hope or possibility of reconciling to himself the almost useless wreck of that now powerless and shrunken party, one of whose liveliest traditions was hatred of him. Stories were even set afloat that some of his accounts, since he had been in the public service, were incorrect. But the most extraordinary and ridiculous tale of all was that during his residence in Russia he had prostituted a beautiful American girl, whom he then had in his service, in order "to seduce the

passions of the Emperor Alexander and sway him to political purposes."

These and other like provocations were not only discouraging but very irritating, and Mr. Adams was not of that careless disposition which is little affected by unjust accusation. On the contrary he was greatly incensed by such treatment, and though he made the most stern and persistent effort to endure an inevitable trial with a patience born of philosophy, since indifference was not at his command, yet he could not refrain from the expression of his sentiments in his secret communings. Occasionally he allowed his wrath to explode with harmless violence between the covers of the Diary, and doubtless he found relief while he discharged his fierce diatribes on these private sheets. His vituperative power was great, and some specimens of it may not come amiss in a sketch of the man. The senators who did not call upon him he regarded as of "rancorous spirit." He spoke of the falsehoods and misrepresentations which "the skunks of party slander . . . have been . . . squirting round the House of Representatives, thence to issue and perfume the atmosphere of the Union." His most intense hatred and vehement denunciation were reserved for John Randolph, whom he thought an abomination too odious and despicable to be

described in words, "the image and superscription of a great man stamped upon base metal." "The besotted violence" of Randolph, he said, has deprived him of "all right to personal civility from me;" and certainly this excommunication from courtesy was made complete and effective. He speaks again of the same victim as a "frequenter of gin lane and beer alley." He indignantly charges that Calhoun, as Speaker, permitted Randolph "in speeches of ten hours long to drink himself drunk with bottled porter, and in raving balderdash of the meridian of Wapping to revile the absent and the present, the living and the dead." This, he says, was "tolerated by Calhoun, because Randolph's ribaldry was all pointed against the Administration, especially against Mr. Clay and me." Again he writes of Randolph: "The rancor of this man's soul against me is that which sustains his life: the agony of [his] envy and hatred of me, and the hope of effecting my downfall, are [his] chief remaining sources of vitality. The issue of the Presidential election will kill [him] by the gratification of [his] revenge." So it was also with W. B. Giles, of Virginia. But Giles's abuse was easier to bear since it had been poured in torrents upon every reputable man, from Washington downwards, who had been prominent in public

affairs since the adoption of the Constitution, so that Giles's memory is now preserved from oblivion solely by the connection which he established with the great and honorable statesmen of the Republic by a course of ceaseless attacks upon them. Some of the foregoing expressions of Mr. Adams may be open to objection on the score of good taste; but the provocation was extreme; public retaliation he would not practise, and wrath must sometimes burst forth in language which was not so unusual in that day as it is at present. It is an unquestionable fact, of which the credit to Mr. Adams can hardly be exaggerated, that he never in any single instance found an excuse for an unworthy act on his own part in the fact that competitors or adversaries were resorting to such expedients.

The election of 1828 gave 178 votes for Jackson and only 83 for Adams. Calhoun was continued as Vice-President by 171 votes, showing plainly enough that even yet there were not two political parties, in any customary or proper sense of the phrase. The victory of Jackson had been foreseen by every one. What had been so generally anticipated could not take Mr. Adams by surprise; yet it was idle for him to seek to conceal his disappointment that an Administra-

tion which he had conducted with his best ability and with thorough conscientiousness should not have seemed to the people worthy of continuance for another term. Little suspecting what the future had in store for him, he felt that his public career had culminated and probably had closed forever, and that if it had not closed exactly in disgrace, yet at least it could not be regarded as ending gloriously or even satisfactorily. But he summoned all his philosophy and fortitude to his aid; he fell back upon his clear conscience and comported himself with dignity, showing all reasonable courtesy to his successor and only perhaps seeming a little deficient in filial piety in presenting so striking a contrast to the shameful conduct of his father in a like crucial hour. His retirement brought to a close a list of Presidents who deserved to be called statesmen in the highest sense of that term, honorable men, pure patriots, and, with perhaps one exception, all of the first order of ability in public affairs. It is necessary to come far down towards this day before a worthy successor of those great men is met with in the list. Dr. Von Holst, by far the ablest writer who has yet dealt with American history, says: "In the person of Adams the last statesman who was to occupy it for a long time left the White House." General Jackson, the candidate of the populace and

the representative hero of the ignorant masses, instituted a new system of administering the Government in which personal interests became the most important element, and that organization and strategy were developed which have since become known and infamous under the name of the "political machine."

While Mr. Adams bore his defeat like a philosopher, he felt secretly very depressed and unhappy by reason of it. He speaks of it as leaving his "character and reputation a wreck," and says that the "sun of his political life sets in the deepest gloom." On January 1, 1829, he writes: "The year begins in gloom. My wife had a sleepless and painful night. The dawn was overcast, and as I began to write my shaded lamp went out, self-extinguished. It was only for lack of oil, and the notice of so trivial an incident may serve but to mark the present temper of my mind." It is painful to behold a man of his vigor, activity, and courage thus prostrated. Again he writes: —

"Three days more and I shall be restored to private life, and left to an old age of retirement though certainly not of repose. I go into it with a combination of parties and public men against my character and reputation, such as I believe never before was exhibited against any man since this Union existed. Posterity will scarcely believe it, but so it is, that this

combination against me has been formed and is now exulting in triumph over me, for the devotion of my life and of all the faculties of my soul to the Union, and to the improvement, physical, moral, and intellectual of my country."

Melancholy words these to be written by an old man who had worked so hard and been so honest, and whose ambition had been of the kind that ennobles him who feels it! Could the curtain of the future have been lifted but for a moment what relief would the glimpse have brought to his crushed and wearied spirit. But though coming events may cast shadows before them, they far less often send bright rays in advance. So he now resolved "to go into the deepest retirement and withdraw from all connection with public affairs." Yet it was with regret that he foretold this fate, and he looked forward with solicitude to the effect which such a mode of life, newly entered upon at his age, would have upon his mind and character. He hopes rather than dares to predict that he will be provided "with useful and profitable occupation, engaging so much of his thoughts and feelings that his mind may not be left to corrode itself."

His return to Quincy held out the less promise of comfort, because the old chasm between him and the Federalist gentlemen of Boston had

been lately reopened. Certain malicious newspaper paragraphs, born of the mischievous spirit of the wretched Giles, had recently set afloat some stories designed seriously to injure Mr. Adams. These were, substantially, that in 1808–9 he had been convinced that some among the leaders of the Federalist party in New England were entertaining a project for separation from the Union, that he had feared that this event would be promoted by the embargo, that he foresaw that the seceding portion would inevitably be compelled into some sort of alliance with Great Britain, that he suspected negotiations to this end to have been already set on foot, that he thereupon gave privately some more or less distinct intimations of these notions of his to sundry prominent Republicans, and even to President Jefferson. These tales, much distorted from the truth and exaggerated as usual, led to the publication of an open letter, in November, 1828, addressed by thirteen Federalists of note in Massachusetts to John Quincy Adams, demanding names and specifications and the production of evidence. Mr. Adams replied briefly, with dignity, and, considering the circumstances, with good temper, stating fairly the substantial import of what he had really said, declaring that he had never mentioned names, and refusing, for good reasons given, either to

do so now or to publish the grounds of such opinions as he had entertained. It was sufficiently clear that he had said nothing secretly which he had reason to regret; and that if he sought to shun the discussion opened by his adversaries, he was influenced by wise forbearance, and not at all by any fear of the consequences to himself. A dispassionate observer could have seen that behind this moderate, rather deprecatory letter there was an abundant reserve of controversial material held for the moment in check. But his adversaries were not dispassionate; on the contrary they were greatly excited and were honestly convinced of the perfect goodness of their cause. They were men of the highest character in public and private life, deservedly of the best repute in the community, of unimpeachable integrity in motives and dealings, influential and respected, men whom it was impossible in New England to treat with neglect or indifference. For this reason it was only the harder to remain silent beneath their published reproach when a refutation was possible. Hating Mr. Adams with an animosity not diminished by the lapse of years since his defection from their party, strong in a consciousness of their own standing before their fellow citizens, the thirteen notables responded with much acrimony to Mr. Adams's unsatisfactory letter.

Thus persistently challenged and assailed, at a time when his recent crushing political defeat made an attack upon him seem a little ungenerous, Mr. Adams at last went into the fight in earnest. He had the good fortune to be thoroughly right, and also to have sufficient evidence to prove and justify at least as much as he had ever said. All this evidence he brought together in a vindicatory pamphlet, which, however, by the time he had completed it he decided not to publish. But fortunately he did not destroy it, and his grandson, in the exercise of a wise discretion, has lately given it to the world. His foes never knew how deeply they were indebted to the self-restraint which induced him to keep this formidable missive harmless in his desk. Full of deep feeling, yet free from ebullitions of temper, clear in statement, concise in style, conclusive in facts, unanswerable in argument, unrelentingly severe in dealing with opponents, it is as fine a specimen of political controversy as exists in the language. Its historical value cannot be exaggerated, but apart from this as a mere literary production it is admirable. Happy were the thirteen that they one and all went down to their graves complaisantly thinking that they had had the last word in the quarrel, little suspecting how great was their obligation to Mr.

Adams for having granted them that privilege. One would think that they might have writhed beneath their moss-grown headstones on the day when his last word at length found public utterance, albeit that the controversy had then become one of the dusty tales of history.[1]

But this task of writing a demolishing pamphlet against the prominent gentlemen of the neighborhood to which he was about to return for his declining years could hardly have been a grateful task. The passage from political disaster to social enmities could not but be painful; and Mr. Adams was probably never more unhappy than at this period of his life. The reward which virtue was tendering to him seemed unmixed bitterness.

Thus at the age of sixty-two years, Mr. Adams found himself that melancholy product of the American governmental system — an ex-

[1] It is with great reluctance that these comments are made, since some persons may think that they come with ill grace from one whose grandfather was one of the thirteen and was supposed to have drafted one or both of their letters. But in spite of the prejudice naturally growing out of this fact, a thorough study of the whole subject has convinced me that Mr. Adams was unquestionably and completely right, and I have no escape from saying so. His adversaries had the excuse of honesty in political error — an excuse which the greatest and wisest men must often fall back upon in times of hot party warfare.

President. At this stage it would seem that the fruit ought to drop from the bough, no further process of development being reasonably probable for it. Yet Mr. Adams had by no means reached this measure of ripeness; he still enjoyed abundant vigor of mind and body, and to lapse into dignified decrepitude was not agreeable, indeed was hardly possible for him. The prospect gave him profound anxiety; he dreaded idleness, apathy, and decay with a keen terror which perhaps constituted a sufficient guaranty against them. Yet what could he do? It would be absurd for him now to furbish up the rusty weapons of the law and enter again upon the tedious labor of collecting a clientage. His property was barely sufficient to enable him to live respectably, even according to the simple standard of the time, and could open to him no occupation in the way of gratifying unremunerative tastes. In March, 1828, he had been advised to use five thousand dollars in a way to promote his reëlection. He refused at once, upon principle; but further set forth "candidly, the state of his affairs:" —

"All my real estate in Quincy and Boston is mortgaged for the payment of my debts; the income of my whole private estate is less than $6,000 a year, and I am paying at least two thousand of that for interest on my debt. Finally, upon going out of office

in one year from this time, destitute of all means of acquiring property, it will only be by the sacrifice of that which I now possess that I shall be able to support my family."

At first he plunged desperately into the Latin classics. He had a strong taste for such reading, and he made a firm resolve to compel this taste now to stand him in good stead in his hour of need. He courageously demanded solace from a pursuit which had yielded him pleasure enough in hours of relaxation, but which was altogether inadequate to fill the huge vacuum now suddenly created in his time and thoughts. There is much pathos in this spectacle of the old man setting himself with ever so feeble a weapon, yet with stern determination, to conquer the cruelty of circumstances. But he knew, of course, that the Roman authors could only help him for a time, by way of distraction, in carrying him through a transition period. He soon set more cheerfully at work upon a memoir of his father, and had also plans for writing a history of the United States. Literature had always possessed strong charms for him, and he had cultivated it after his usual studious and conscientious fashion. But his style was too often prolix, sententious, and turgid — faults which marked nearly all the writing done in this country in those days. The

world has probably not lost much by reason of the non-completion of the contemplated volumes. He could have made no other contribution to the history of the country at all approaching in value or interest to the Diary, of which a most important part was still to be written. For a brief time just now this loses its historic character, but makes up for the loss by depicting admirably some traits in the mental constitution of the diarist. Tales of enchantment, he says, pleased his boyhood, but "the humors of Falstaff hardly affected me at all. Bardolph and Pistol and Nym were personages quite unintelligible to me; and the lesson of Sir Hugh Evans to the boy Williams was quite too serious an affair." In truth, no man can ever have been more utterly void of a sense of humor or an appreciation of wit than was Mr. Adams. Not a single instance of an approach to either is to be found throughout the twelve volumes of his Diary. Not even in the simple form of the "good story" could he find pleasure, and subtler delicacies were wasted on his well-regulated mind as dainty French dishes would be on the wholesome palate of a day-laborer. The books which bore the stamp of well-established approval, the acknowledged classics of the English, Latin, and French languages he read with a mingled sense of duty and of pleasure, and

evidently with cultivated appreciation, though whether he would have made an original discovery of their merits may be doubted. Occasionally he failed to admire even those volumes which deserved admiration, and then with characteristic honesty he admitted the fact. He tried Paradise Lost ten times before he could get through with it, and was nearly thirty years old when he first succeeded in reading it to the end. Thereafter he became very fond of it, but plainly by an acquired taste. He tried smoking and Milton, he says, at the same time, in the hope of discovering the "recondite charm" in them which so pleased his father. He was more easily successful with the tobacco than with the poetry. Many another has had the like experience, but the confession is not always so frankly forthcoming.

Fate, however, had in store for Mr. Adams labors to which he was better suited than those of literature, and tasks to be performed which the nation could ill afford to exchange for an apotheosis of our second President, or even for a respectable but probably not very readable history. The most brilliant and glorious years of his career were yet to be lived. He was to earn in his old age a noble fame and distinction far transcending any achievement of his youth and middle age, and was to attain the highest

pinnacle of his fame after he had left the greatest office of the Government, and during a period for which presumably nothing better had been allotted than that he should tranquilly await the summons of death. It is a striking circumstance that the fullness of greatness for one who had been Senator, Minister to England, Secretary of State, and President, remained to be won in the comparatively humble position of a Representative in Congress.

CHAPTER III

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

In September, 1830, Mr. Adams notes in his Diary a suggestion made to him that he might if he wished be elected to the national House of Representatives from the Plymouth district. The gentleman who threw out this tentative proposition remarked that in his opinion the acceptance of this position by an ex-President "instead of degrading the individual would elevate the representative character." Mr. Adams replied, that he "had in that respect no scruple whatever. No person could be degraded by serving the people as a Representative in Congress. Nor in my opinion would an ex-President of the United States be degraded by serving as a selectman of his town, if elected thereto by the people." A few weeks later his election was accomplished by a flattering vote, the poll showing for him 1817 votes out of 2565, with only 373 for the next candidate. He continued thenceforth to represent this district until his death, a period of about sixteen years. During this time he was occasionally suggested

as a candidate for the governorship of the State, but was always reluctant to stand. The feeling between the Freemasons and the anti-Masons ran very high for several years, and once he was prevailed upon to allow his name to be used by the latter party. The result was that there was no election by the people; and as he had been very loath to enter the contest in the beginning, he insisted upon withdrawing from before the legislature. We have now therefore only to pursue his career in the lower house of Congress.

Unfortunately, but of obvious necessity, it is possible to touch only upon the more salient points of this which was really by far the most striking and distinguished portion of his life. To do more than this would involve an explanation of the politics of the country and the measures before Congress much more elaborate than would be possible in this volume. It will be necessary, therefore, to confine ourselves to drawing a picture of him in his character as the great combatant of Southern slavery. In the waging of this mighty conflict we shall see both his mind and his character developing in strength even in these years of his old age, and his traits standing forth in bolder relief than ever before. In his place on the floor of the House of Representatives he was destined to appear a more impressive figure than in any

of the higher positions which he had previously filled. There he was to do his greatest work and to win a peculiar and distinctive glory which takes him out of the general throng even of famous statesmen, and entitles his name to be remembered with an especial reverence. Adequately to sketch his achievements, and so to do his memory the honor which it deserves, would require a pen as eloquent as has been wielded by any writer of our language. I can only attempt a brief and insufficient narrative.

In his conscientious way he was faithful and industrious to a rare degree. He was never absent and seldom late; he bore unflinchingly the burden of severe committee work, and shirked no toil on the plea of age or infirmity. He attended closely to all the business of the House; carefully formed his opinions on every question; never failed to vote except for cause; and always had a sufficient reason independent of party allegiance to sustain his vote. Living in the age of oratory, he earned the name of "the old man eloquent." Yet he was not an orator in the sense in which Webster, Clay, and Calhoun were orators. He was not a rhetorician; he had neither grace of manner nor a fine presence, neither an imposing delivery, nor even pleasing tones. On the contrary, he was exceptionally

lacking in all these qualities. He was short, rotund, and bald; about the time when he entered Congress, complaints become frequent in his Diary of weak and inflamed eyes, and soon these organs became so rheumy that the water would trickle down his cheeks; a shaking of the hand grew upon him to such an extent that in time he had to use artificial assistance to steady it for writing; his voice was high, shrill, liable to break, piercing enough to make itself heard, but not agreeable. This hardly seems the picture of an orator; nor was it to any charm of elocution that he owed his influence, but rather to the fact that men soon learned that what he said was always well worth hearing. When he entered Congress he had been for much more than a third of a century zealously gathering knowledge in public affairs, and during his career in that body every year swelled the already vast accumulation. Moreover, listeners were always sure to get a bold and an honest utterance and often pretty keen words from him, and he never spoke to an inattentive audience or to a thin house. Whether pleased or incensed by what he said, the Representatives at least always listened to it. He was by nature a hard fighter, and by the circumstances of his course in Congress this quality was stimulated to such a degree that parliamentary history does not show

his equal as a gladiator. His power of invective was extraordinary, and he was untiring and merciless in his use of it. Theoretically he disapproved of sarcasm, but practically he could not refrain from it. Men winced and cowered before his milder attacks, became sometimes dumb, sometimes furious with mad rage before his fiercer assaults. Such struggles evidently gave him pleasure, and there was scarce a back in Congress that did not at one time or another feel the score of his cutting lash; though it was the Southerners and the Northern allies of Southerners whom chiefly he singled out for torture. He was irritable and quick to wrath; he himself constantly speaks of the infirmity of his temper, and in his many conflicts his principal concern was to keep it in control. His enemies often referred to it and twitted him with it. Of alliances he was careless, and friendships he had almost none. But in the creation of enmities he was terribly successful. Not so much at first, but increasingly as years went on, a state of ceaseless, vigilant hostility became his normal condition. From the time when he fairly entered upon the long struggle against slavery, he enjoyed few peaceful days in the House. But he seemed to thrive upon the warfare, and to be never so well pleased as when he was bandying hot words with slave-holders and the

Northern supporters of slave-holders. When the air of the House was thick with crimination and abuse he seemed to suck in fresh vigor and spirit from the hate-laden atmosphere. When invective fell around him in showers, he screamed back his retaliation with untiring rapidity and marvellous dexterity of aim. No odds could appall him. With his back set firm against a solid moral principle, it was his joy to strike out at a multitude of foes. They lost their heads as well as their tempers, but in the extremest moments of excitement and anger Mr. Adams's brain seemed to work with machine-like coolness and accuracy. With flushed face, streaming eyes, animated gesticulation, and cracking voice, he always retained perfect mastery of all his intellectual faculties. He thus became a terrible antagonist, whom all feared, yet fearing could not refrain from attacking, so bitterly and incessantly did he choose to exert his wonderful power of exasperation. Few men could throw an opponent into wild blind fury with such speed and certainty as he could; and he does not conceal the malicious gratification which such feats brought to him. A leader of such fighting capacity, so courageous, with such a magazine of experience and information, and with a character so irreproachable, could have won brilliant victories in public life at the head

of even a small band of devoted followers. But Mr. Adams never had and apparently never wanted followers. Other prominent public men were brought not only into collision but into comparison with their contemporaries. But Mr. Adams's individuality was so strong that he can be compared with no one. It was not an individuality of genius nor to any remarkable extent of mental qualities; but rather an individuality of character. To this fact is probably to be attributed his peculiar solitariness. Men touch each other for purposes of attachment through their characters much more than through their minds. But few men, even in agreeing with Mr. Adams, felt themselves in sympathy with him. Occasionally conscience, or invincible logic, or even policy and self-interest, might compel one or another politician to stand beside him in debate or in voting; but no current of fellow feeling ever passed between such temporary comrades and him. It was the cold connection of duty or of business. The first instinct of nearly every one was opposition towards him; coalition might be forced by circumstances but never came by volition. For the purpose of winning immediate successes this was of course a most unfortunate condition of relationships. Yet it had some compensations: it left such influence as Mr. Adams could exert by stead-

fastness and argument entirely unweakened by suspicion of hidden motives or personal ends. He had the weight and enjoyed the respect which a sincerity beyond distrust must always command in the long run. Of this we shall see some striking instances.

One important limitation, however, belongs to this statement of solitariness. It was confined to his position in Congress. Outside of the city of Washington great numbers of the people, especially in New England, lent him a hearty support and regarded him with friendship and admiration. These men had strong convictions and deep feelings, and their adherence counted for much. Moreover, their numbers steadily increased, and Mr. Adams saw that he was the leader in a cause which engaged the sound sense and the best feeling of the intelligent people of the country, and which was steadily gaining ground. Without such encouragement it is doubtful whether even his persistence would have held out through so long and extreme a trial. The sense of human fellowship was needful to him; he could go without it in Congress, but he could not have gone without it altogether.

Mr. Adams took his seat in the House as a member of the twenty-second Congress in December, 1831. He had been elected by the National Republican, afterward better known as

the Whig party, but one of his first acts was to declare that he would be bound by no partisan connection, but would in every matter act independently. This course he regarded as a "duty imposed upon him by his peculiar position," in that he "had spent the greatest portion of his life in the service of the whole nation and had been honored with their highest trust." Many persons had predicted that he would find himself subjected to embarrassments and perhaps to humiliations by reason of his apparent descent in the scale of political dignities. He notes, however, that he encountered no annoyance on this score, but on the contrary he was rather treated with an especial respect. He was made chairman of the Committee on Manufactures, a laborious as well as an important and honorable position at all times, and especially so at this juncture when the rebellious mutterings of South Carolina against the protective tariff were already to be heard rolling and swelling like portentous thunder from the fiery Southern regions. He would have preferred to exchange this post for a place upon the Committee on Foreign Affairs, for whose business he felt more fitted. But he was told that in the impending crisis his ability, authority, and prestige were all likely to be needed in the place allotted to him to aid in the salvation of the country.

The nullification chapter of our history cannot here be entered upon at length, and Mr. Adams's connection with it must be very shortly stated. At the first meeting of his committee he remarks: "A reduction of the duties upon many of the articles in the tariff was understood by all to be the object to be effected;" and a little later he said that he should be disposed to give such aid as he could to any plan for this reduction which the Treasury Department should devise. "He should certainly not consent to sacrifice the manufacturing interest," he said, "but something of concession would be due from that interest to appease the discontents of the South." He was in a reasonable frame of mind; but unfortunately other people were rapidly ceasing to be reasonable. When Jackson's message of December 4, 1832, was promulgated, showing a disposition to do for South Carolina pretty much all that she demanded, Mr. Adams was bitterly indignant. The message, he said, "recommends a total change in the policy of the Union with reference to the Bank, manufactures, internal improvement, and the public lands. It goes to dissolve the Union into its original elements, and is in substance a complete surrender to the nullifiers of South Carolina." When, somewhat later on, the President lost his temper and flamed

out in his famous proclamation to meet the nullification ordinance, he spoke in tones more pleasing to Mr. Adams. But the ultimate compromise which disposed of the temporary dissension without permanently settling the fundamental question of the constitutional right of nullification was extremely distasteful to him. He was utterly opposed to the concessions which were made while South Carolina still remained contumacious. He was for compelling her to retire altogether from her rebellious position and to repeal her unconstitutional enactments wholly and unconditionally, before one jot should be abated from the obnoxious duties. When the bill for the modification of the tariff was under debate, he moved to strike out all but the enacting clause, and supported his motion in a long speech, insisting that no tariff ought to pass until it was known "whether there was any measure by which a State could defeat the laws of the Union." In a minority report from his own committee he strongly censured the policy of the Administration. He was for meeting, fighting out, and determining at this crisis the whole doctrine of state rights and secession. "One particle of compromise," he said, with what truth events have since shown clearly enough, would "directly lead to the final and irretrievable dissolution of the Union."

In his usual strong and thorough-going fashion he was for persisting in the vigorous and spirited measures, the mere brief declaration of which, though so quickly receded from, won for Jackson a measure of credit greater than he deserved. Jackson was thrown into a great rage by the threats of South Carolina, and replied to them with the same prompt wrath with which he had sometimes resented insults from individuals. But in his cool inner mind he was in sympathy with the demands which that State preferred, and though undoubtedly he would have fought her, had the dispute been forced to that pass, yet he was quite willing to make concessions, which were in fact in consonance with his own views as well as with hers, in order to avoid that sad conclusion. He was satisfied to have the instant emergency pass over in a manner rendered superficially creditable to himself by his outburst of temper, under cover of which he sacrificed the substantial matter of principle without a qualm. He shook his fist and shouted defiance in the face of the nullifiers, while Mr. Clay smuggled a comfortable concession into their pockets. Jackson, notwithstanding his belligerent attitude, did all he could to help Clay and was well pleased with the result. Mr. Adams was not. He watched the disingenuous game with disgust. It is certain that if he had

still been in the White House, the matter would have had a very different ending, bloodier, it may be, and more painful, but much more conclusive.

For the most part Mr. Adams found himself in opposition to President Jackson's Administration. This was not attributable to any sense of personal hostility towards a successful rival, but to an inevitable antipathy towards the measures, methods, and ways adopted by the General so unfortunately transferred to civil life. Few intelligent persons, and none having the statesman habit of mind, befriended the reckless, violent, eminently unstatesmanlike President. His ultimate weakness in the nullification matter, his opposition to internal improvements, his policy of sacrificing the public lands to individual speculators, his warfare against the Bank of the United States conducted by methods the most unjustifiable, the transaction of the removal of the deposits so disreputable and injurious in all its details, the importation of Mrs. Eaton's visiting-list into the politics and government of the country, the dismissal of the oldest and best public servants as a part of the nefarious system of using public offices as rewards for political aid and personal adherence, the formation from base ingredients of the ignoble "Kitchen Cabinet," — all these doings, together with much

more of the like sort, constituted a career which could only seem blundering, undignified, and dishonorable in the eyes of a man like Mr. Adams, who regarded statesmanship with the reverence due to the noblest of human callings.

Right as Mr. Adams was generally in his opposition to Jackson, yet once he deserves credit for the contrary course. This was in the matter of our relations with France. The treaty of 1831 secured to this country an indemnity of $5,000,000, which, however, it had never been possible to collect. This procrastination raised Jackson's ever ready ire, and casting to the winds any further dunning, he resolved either to have the money or to fight for it. He sent a message to Congress, recommending that if France should not promptly settle the account, letters of marque and reprisal against her commerce should be issued. He ordered Edward Livingston, minister at Paris, to demand his passports and cross over to London. These eminently proper and ultimately effectual measures alarmed the large party of the timid; and the General found himself in danger of extensive desertions even on the part of his usual supporters. But as once before in a season of his dire extremity his courage and vigor had brought the potent aid of Mr. Adams to his side, so now again he came under a heavy debt

of gratitude to the same champion. Mr. Adams stood by him with generous gallantry, and by a telling speech in the House probably saved him from serious humiliation and even disaster. The President's style of dealing had roused Mr. Adams's spirit, and he spoke with a fire and vehemence which accomplished the unusual feat of changing the predisposed minds of men too familiar with speech-making to be often much influenced by it in the practical matter of voting. He thought at the time that the success of this speech, brilliant as it appeared, was not unlikely to result in his political ruin. Jackson would befriend and reward his thorough-going partisans at any cost to his own conscience or the public welfare; but the exceptional aid, tendered not from a sense of personal fealty to himself, but simply from the motive of aiding the right cause happening in the especial instance to have been espoused by him, never won from him any token of regard. In November, 1837, Mr. Adams, speaking of his personal relations with the President, said: —

"Though I had served him more than any other living man ever did, and though I supported his Administration at the hazard of my own political destruction, and effected for him at a moment when his own friends were deserting him what no other member of Congress ever accomplished for him — an

unanimous vote of the House of Representatives to support him in his quarrel with France; though I supported him in other very critical periods of his Administration, my return from him was insult, indignity, and slander."

Antipathy had at last become the definitive condition of these two men — antipathy both political and personal. At one time a singular effort to reconcile them — probably though not certainly undertaken with the knowledge of Jackson — was made by Richard M. Johnson. This occurred shortly before the inauguration of the war conducted by the President against the Bank of the United States; and judging by the rest of Jackson's behavior at this period, there was probably at least as much of calculation in his motives, if in fact he was cognizant of Johnson's approaches, as there was of any real desire to reëstablish the bygone relation of honorable friendship. To the advances thus made Mr. Adams replied a little coldly, not quite repellently, that Jackson, having been responsible for the suspension of personal intercourse, must now be undisguisedly the active party in renewing it. At the same time he professed himself "willing to receive in a spirit of conciliation any advance which in that spirit General Jackson might make." But nothing came of this intrinsically hopeless attempt. On

the contrary the two drew rapidly and more widely apart, and entertained concerning each other opinions which grew steadily more unfavorable, and upon Adams's part more contemptuous, as time went on.

Fifteen months later General Jackson made his visit to Boston, and it was proposed that Harvard College should confer upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws. The absurdity of the act, considered simply in itself, was admitted by all. But the argument in its favor was based upon the established usage of the College as towards all other Presidents, so that its omission in this case might seem a personal slight. Mr. Adams, being at the time a member of the Board of Overseers, strongly opposed the proposition, but of course in vain. All that he could do was, for his own individual part, to refuse to be present at the conferring of the degree, giving as the minor reason for his absence, that he could hold no friendly intercourse with the President, but for the major reason that "independent of that, as myself an affectionate child of our Alma Mater, I would not be present to witness her disgrace in conferring her highest literary honors upon a barbarian who could not write a sentence of grammar and hardly could spell his own name." "A Doctorate of Laws," he said, "for which an apology was necessary,

was a cheap honor and . . . a sycophantic compliment." After the deed was done, he used to amuse himself by speaking of "Doctor Andrew Jackson." This same eastern tour of Jackson's called forth many other expressions of bitter sarcasm from Adams. The President was ill and unable to carry out the programme of entertainment and exhibition prepared for him: whereupon Mr. Adams remarks: —

"I believe much of his debility is politic. . . . He is one of our tribe of great men who turn disease to commodity, like John Randolph, who for forty years was always dying. Jackson, ever since he became a mark of public attention, has been doing the same thing. . . . He is now alternately giving out his chronic diarrhœa and making Warren bleed him for a pleurisy, and posting to Cambridge for a doctorate of laws; mounting the monument of Bunker's Hill to hear a fulsome address and receive two cannon balls from Edward Everett," etc. "Four fifths of his sickness is trickery, and the other fifth mere fatigue."

This sounds, it must be confessed, a trifle rancorous; but Adams had great excuse for nourishing rancor towards Jackson.

It is time, however, to return to the House of Representatives. It was not by bearing his share in the ordinary work of that body, important or exciting as that might at one time or another happen to be, that Mr. Adams was to

win in Congress that reputation which has been already described as far overshadowing all his previous career. A special task and a peculiar mission were before him. It was a part of his destiny to become the champion of the anti-slavery cause in the national legislature. Almost the first thing which he did after he had taken his seat in Congress was to present "fifteen petitions signed numerously by citizens of Pennsylvania, praying for the abolition of slavery and the slave-trade in the District of Columbia." He simply moved their reference to the Committee on the District of Columbia, declaring that he should not support that part of the petition which prayed for abolition in the District. The time had not yet come when the South felt much anxiety at such manifestations, and these first stones were dropped into the pool without stirring a ripple on the surface. For about four years more we hear little in the Diary concerning slavery. It was not until 1835, when the annexation of Texas began to be mooted, that the North fairly took the alarm, and the irrepressible conflict began to develop. Then at once we find Mr. Adams at the front. That he had always cherished an abhorrence of slavery and a bitter antipathy to slave-holders as a class is sufficiently indicated by many chance remarks scattered through his Diary

from early years. Now that a great question, vitally affecting the slave power, divided the country into parties and inaugurated the struggle which never again slept until it was settled forever by the result of the civil war, Mr. Adams at once assumed the function of leader. His position should be clearly understood; for in the vast labor which lay before the abolition party different tasks fell to different men. Mr. Adams assumed to be neither an agitator nor a reformer; by necessity of character, training, fitness, and official position, he was a legislator and statesman. The task which accident or destiny allotted to him was neither to preach among the people a crusade against slavery, nor to devise and keep in action the thousand resources which busy men throughout the country were constantly multiplying for the purpose of spreading and increasing a popular hostility towards the great "institution." Every great cause has need of its fanatics, its vanguard to keep far in advance of what is for the time reasonable and possible; it has not less need of the wiser and cooler heads to discipline and control the great mass which is set in motion by the reckless forerunners, to see to the accomplishment of that which the present circumstances and development of the movement allow to be accomplished. It fell to Mr. Adams to

direct the assault against the outworks which were then vulnerable, and to see that the force then possessed by the movement was put to such uses as would insure definite results instead of being wasted in endeavors which as yet were impossible of achievement. Drawing his duty from his situation and surroundings, he left to others, to younger men and more rhetorical natures, outside the walls of Congress, the business of firing the people and stirring popular opinion and sympathy. He was set to do that portion of the work of abolition which was to be done in Congress, to encounter the mighty efforts which were made to stifle the great humanitarian cry in the halls of the national legislature. This was quite as much as one man was equal to; in fact, it is certain that no one then in public life except Mr. Adams could have done it effectually. So obvious is this that one cannot help wondering what would have befallen the cause, had he not been just where he was to forward it in just the way that he did. It is only another among the many instances of the need surely finding the man. His qualifications were unique; his ability, his knowledge, his prestige and authority, his high personal character, his persistence and courage, his combativeness stimulated by an acrimonious temper but checked by a sound judgment, his

merciless power of invective, his independence and carelessness of applause or vilification, friendship or enmity, constituted him an opponent fully equal to the enormous odds which the slave-holding interest arrayed against him. A like moral and mental fitness was to be found in no one else. Numbers could not overawe him, nor loneliness dispirit him. He was probably the most formidable fighter in debate of whom parliamentary records preserve the memory. The hostility which he encountered beggars description; the English language was deficient in adequate words of virulence and contempt to express the feelings which were entertained towards him. At home he had not the countenance of that class in society to which he naturally belonged. A second time he found the chief part of the gentlemen of Boston and its vicinity, the leading lawyers, the rich merchants, the successful manufacturers, not only opposed to him, but entertaining towards him sentiments of personal dislike and even vindictiveness. This stratum of the community, having a natural distaste for disquieting agitation and influenced by class feeling, — the gentlemen of the North sympathizing with the "aristocracy" of the South, — could not make common cause with anti-slavery people. Fortunately, however, Mr. Adams was returned by a country district where

the old Puritan instincts were still strong. The intelligence and free spirit of New England were at his back, and were fairly represented by him; in spite of high-bred disfavor they carried him gallantly through the long struggle. The people of the Plymouth district sent him back to the House every two years from the time of his first election to the year of his death, and the disgust of the gentlemen of Boston was after all of trifling consequence to him and of no serious influence upon the course of history. The old New England instinct was in him as it was in the mass of the people; that instinct made him the real exponent of New England thought, belief, and feeling, and that same instinct made the great body of voters stand by him with unswerving constancy. When his fellow Representatives, almost to a man, deserted him, he was sustained by many a token of sympathy and admiration coming from among the people at large. Time and the history of the United States have been his potent vindicators. The conservative, conscienceless respectability of wealth was, as is usually the case with it in the annals of the Anglo-Saxon race, quite in the wrong and predestined to well-merited defeat. It adds to the honor due to Mr. Adams that his sense of right was true enough, and that his vision was clear enough, to lead him out of that strong thraldom

which class feelings, traditions, and comradeship are wont to exercise.

But it is time to resume the narrative and to let Mr. Adams's acts — of which after all it is possible to give only the briefest sketch, selecting a few of the more striking incidents — tell the tale of his Congressional life.

On February 14, 1835, Mr. Adams again presented two petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, but without giving rise to much excitement. The fusillade was, however, getting too thick and fast to be endured longer with indifference by the impatient Southerners. At the next session of Congress they concluded to try to stop it, and their ingenious scheme was to make Congress shot-proof, so to speak, against such missiles. On January 4, 1836, Mr. Adams presented an abolition petition couched in the usual form, and moved that it be laid on the table, as others like it had lately been. But in a moment Mr. Glascock, of Georgia, moved that the petition be not received. Debate sprang up on a point of order, and two days later, before the question of reception was determined, a resolution was offered by Mr. Jarvis, of Maine, declaring that the House would not entertain any petitions for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. This resolution was supported on the

ground that Congress had no constitutional power in the premises. Some days later, January 18, 1836, before any final action had been reached upon this proposition, Mr. Adams presented some more abolition petitions, one of them signed by "one hundred and forty-eight ladies, citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; for, I said, I had not yet brought myself to doubt whether females were citizens." The usual motion not to receive was made, and then a new device was resorted to in the shape of a motion that the motion not to receive be laid on the table.

On February 8, 1836, this novel scheme for shutting off petitions against slavery immediately upon their presentation was referred to a select committee of which Mr. Pinckney was chairman. On May 18 this committee reported in substance: 1. That Congress had no power to interfere with slavery in any State; 2. That Congress ought not to interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia; 3. That whereas the agitation of the subject was disquieting and objectionable, "all petitions, memorials, resolutions or papers, relating in any way or to any extent whatsoever to the subject of slavery or the abolition of slavery, shall, without being either printed or referred, be laid upon the table, and that no further action whatever shall

be had thereon." When it came to taking a vote upon this report a division of the question was called for, and the yeas and nays were ordered. The first resolution was then read, whereupon Mr. Adams at once rose and pledged himself, if the House would allow him five minutes' time, to prove it to be false. But cries of "order" resounded; he was compelled to take his seat and the resolution was adopted by 182 to 9. Upon the second resolution he asked to be excused from voting, and his name was passed in the call. The third resolution with its preamble was then read, and Mr. Adams, so soon as his name was called, rose and said: "I hold the resolution to be a direct violation of the Constitution of the United States, the rules of this House, and the rights of my constituents." He was interrupted by shrieks of "order" resounding on every side; but he only spoke the louder and obstinately finished his sentence before resuming his seat. The resolution was of course agreed to, the vote standing 117 to 68. Such was the beginning of the famous "gag" which became and long remained — afterward in a worse shape — a standing rule of the House. Regularly in each new Congress when the adoption of rules came up, Mr. Adams moved to rescind the "gag;" but for many years his motions continued to be voted

down, as a matter of course. Its imposition was clearly a mistake on the part of the slave-holding party; free debate would almost surely have hurt them less than this interference with the freedom of petition. They had assumed an untenable position. Henceforth, as the persistent advocate of the right of petition, Mr. Adams had a support among the people at large vastly greater than he could have enjoyed as the opponent of slavery. As his adversaries had shaped the issue he was predestined to victory in a free country.

A similar scene was enacted on December 21 and 22, 1837. A "gag" or "speech-smothering" resolution being then again before the House, Mr. Adams, when his name was called in the taking of the vote, cried out "amidst a perfect war-whoop of 'order:' 'I hold the resolution to be a violation of the Constitution, of the right of petition of my constituents and of the people of the United States, and of my right to freedom of speech as a member of this House.'" Afterward, in reading over the names of members who had voted, the clerk omitted that of Mr. Adams, this utterance of his not having constituted a vote. Mr. Adams called attention to the omission. The clerk, by direction of the Speaker, thereupon called his name. His only reply was by a motion that his answer as al-

ready made should be entered on the Journal. The Speaker said that this motion was not in order. Mr. Adams, resolute to get upon the record, requested that his motion with the Speaker's decision that it was not in order might be entered on the Journal. The next day, finding that this entry had not been made in proper shape, he brought up the matter again. One of his opponents made a false step, and Mr. Adams "bantered him" upon it until the other was provoked into saying that, "if the question ever came to the issue of war, the Southern people would march into New England and conquer it." Mr. Adams replied that no doubt they would if they could; that he entered his resolution upon the Journal because he was resolved that his opponent's "name should go down to posterity damned to everlasting fame." No one ever gained much in a war of words with this ever-ready and merciless tongue.

Mr. Adams, having soon become known to all the nation as the indomitable presenter of anti-slavery petitions, quickly found that great numbers of people were ready to keep him busy in this trying task. For a long while it was almost as much as he could accomplish to receive, sort, schedule, and present the infinite number of petitions and memorials which came to him praying for the abolition of slavery and of the

slave-trade in the District of Columbia, and opposing the annexation of Texas. It was an occupation not altogether devoid even of physical danger, and calling for an amount of moral courage greater than it is now easy to appreciate. It is the incipient stage of such a conflict that tests the mettle of the little band of innovators. When it grows into a great party question much less courage is demanded. The mere presentation of an odious petition may seem in itself to be a simple task; but to find himself in a constant state of antagonism to a powerful, active, and vindictive majority in a debating body, constituted of such material as then made up the House of Representatives, wore hardly even upon the iron temper and inflexible disposition of Mr. Adams. "The most insignificant error of conduct in me at this time," he writes in April, 1837, "would be my irredeemable ruin in this world; and both the ruling political parties are watching with intense anxiety for some overt act by me to set the whole pack of their hireling presses upon me." But amid the host of foes, and aware that he could count upon the aid of scarcely a single hearty and daring friend, he labored only the more earnestly. The severe pressure against him begat only the more severe counter pressure upon his part.

Besides these natural and legitimate difficulties, Mr. Adams was further in the embarrassing position of one who has to fear as much from the imprudence of allies as from open hostility of antagonists, and he was often compelled to guard against a peculiar risk coming from his very coadjutors in the great cause. The extremists who had cast aside all regard for what was practicable, and who utterly scorned to consider the feasibility or the consequences of measures which seemed to them to be correct as abstract propositions of morality, were constantly urging him to action which would only have destroyed him forever in political life, would have stripped him of his influence, exiled him from that position in Congress where he could render the most efficient service that was in him, and left him naked of all usefulness and utterly helpless to continue that essential portion of the labor which could be conducted by no one else. "The abolitionists generally," he said, "are constantly urging me to indiscreet movements, which would ruin me, and weaken and not strengthen their cause." His family, on the other hand, sought to restrain him from all connection with these dangerous partisans. "Between these adverse impulses," he writes, "my mind is agitated almost to distraction. . . . I walk on the edge of a precipice almost every

step that I take." In the midst of all this anxiety, however, he was fortunately supported by the strong commendation of his constituents which they once loyally declared by formal and unanimous votes in a convention summoned for the express purpose of manifesting their support. His feelings appear by an entry in his Diary in October, 1837: —

"I have gone [he said] as far upon this article, the abolition of slavery, as the public opinion of the free portion of the Union will bear, and so far that scarcely a slave-holding member of the House dares to vote with me upon any question. I have as yet been thoroughly sustained by my own State, but one step further and I hazard my own standing and influence there, my own final overthrow, and the cause of liberty itself for an indefinite time, certainly for more than my remnant of life. Were there in the House one member capable of taking the lead in this cause of universal emancipation, which is moving onward in the world and in this country, I would withdraw from the contest which will rage with increasing fury as it draws to its crisis, but for the management of which my age, infirmities, and approaching end totally disqualify me. There is no such man in the House."

September 15, 1837, he says: "I have been for some time occupied day and night, when at home, in assorting and recording the petitions

and remonstrances against the annexation of Texas, and other anti-slavery petitions, which flow upon me in torrents." The next day he presented the singular petition of one Sherlock S. Gregory, who had conceived the eccentric notion of asking Congress to declare him "an alien or stranger in the land so long as slavery exists and the wrongs of the Indians are unrequited and unrepented of." September 28 he presented a batch of his usual petitions, and also asked leave to offer a resolution calling for a report concerning the coasting trade in slaves. "There was what Napoleon would have called a superb NO! returned to my request from the servile side of the House." The next day he presented fifty-one more like documents, and notes having previously presented one hundred and fifty more.

In December, 1837, still at this same work, he made a hard but fruitless effort to have the Texan remonstrances and petitions sent to a select committee instead of to that on foreign affairs which was constituted in the Southern interest. On December 29 he "presented several bundles of abolition and anti-slavery petitions," and said that, having declared his opinion that the gag-rule was unconstitutional, null, and void, he should "submit to it only as to physical force." January 3, 1838, he presented

"about a hundred petitions, memorials, and remonstrances, — all laid on the table." January 15 he presented fifty more. January 28 he received thirty-one petitions, and spent that day and the next in assorting and filing these and others which he previously had, amounting in all to one hundred and twenty. February 14, in the same year, was a field-day in the petition campaign: he presented then no less than three hundred and fifty petitions, all but three or four of which bore more or less directly upon the slavery question. Among these petitions was one

"praying that Congress would take measures to protect citizens from the North going to the South from danger to their lives. When the motion to lay that on the table was made, I said that, 'In another part of the Capitol it had been threatened that if a Northern abolitionist should go to North Carolina, and utter a principle of the Declaration of Independence' — Here a loud cry of 'order! order!' burst forth, in which the Speaker yelled the loudest. I waited till it subsided, and then resumed, 'that if they could catch him they would hang him!' I said this so as to be distinctly heard throughout the hall, the renewed deafening shout of 'order! order!' notwithstanding. The Speaker then said, 'The gentleman from Massachusetts will take his seat;' which I did and immediately rose again and presented another petition. He did not dare tell me that I could not

proceed without permission of the House, and I proceeded. The threat to hang Northern abolitionists was uttered by Preston of the Senate within the last fortnight."

On March 12, of the same year, he presented ninety-six petitions, nearly all of an anti-slavery character, one of them for "expunging the Declaration of Independence from the Journals."

On December 14, 1838, Mr. Wise, of Virginia, objected to the reception of certain anti-slavery petitions. The Speaker ruled his objection out of order, and from this ruling Wise appealed. The question on the appeal was taken by yeas and nays. When Mr. Adams's name was called, he relates: —

"I rose and said, 'Mr. Speaker, considering all the resolutions introduced by the gentleman from New Hampshire as' — The Speaker roared out, 'The gentleman from Massachusetts must answer Aye or No, and nothing else. Order!' With a reinforced voice — 'I refuse to answer, because I consider all the proceedings of the House as unconstitutional' — While in a firm and swelling voice I pronounced distinctly these words, the Speaker and about two thirds of the House cried, 'order! order! order!' till it became a perfect yell. I paused a moment for it to cease and then said, 'a direct violation of the Constitution of the United States.' While speaking these

words with loud, distinct, and slow articulation, the bawl of 'order! order!' resounded again from two thirds of the House. The Speaker, with agonizing lungs, screamed, 'I call upon the House to support me in the execution of my duty!' I then coolly resumed my seat. Waddy Thompson, of South Carolina, advancing into one of the aisles with a sarcastic smile and silvery tone of voice, said, 'What aid from the House would the Speaker desire?' The Speaker snarled back, 'The gentleman from South Carolina is out of order!' and a peal of laughter burst forth from all sides of the House."

So that little skirmish ended, much more cheerfully than was often the case.

December 20, 1838, he presented fifty anti-slavery petitions, among which were three praying for the recognition of the Republic of Hayti. Petitions of this latter kind he strenuously insisted should be referred to a select committee, or else to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, accompanied in the latter case with explicit instructions that a report thereon should be brought in. He audaciously stated that he asked for these instructions because so many petitions of a like tenor had been sent to the Foreign Affairs Committee, and had found it a limbo from which they never again emerged, and the chairman had said that this would continue to be the case. The chairman, sitting two rows

behind Mr. Adams, said, "that insinuation should not be made against a gentleman!" "I shall make," retorted Mr. Adams, "what insinuation I please. This is not an insinuation, but a direct, positive assertion."

January 7, 1839, he cheerfully records that he presented ninety-five petitions, bearing "directly or indirectly upon the slavery topics," and some of them very exasperating in their language. March 30, 1840, he handed in no less than five hundred and eleven petitions, many of which were not receivable under the "gag" rule adopted on January 28 of that year, which had actually gone the length of refusing so much as a reception to abolition petitions. April 13, 1840, he presented a petition for the repeal of the laws in the District of Columbia, which authorized the whipping of women. Besides this he had a multitude of others, and he only got through the presentation of them "just as the morning hour expired." On January 21, 1841, he found much amusement in puzzling his Southern adversaries by presenting some petitions in which, besides the usual anti-slavery prayers, there was a prayer to refuse to admit to the Union any new State whose constitution should tolerate slavery. The Speaker said that only the latter prayer could be *received* under the "gag" rule. Connor, of

North Carolina, moved to lay on the table so much of the petition as could be received. Mr. Adams tauntingly suggested that in order to do this it would be necessary to mutilate the document by cutting it into two pieces; whereat there was great wrath and confusion, "the House got into a snarl, the Speaker knew not what to do." The Southerners raved and fumed for a while, and finally resorted to their usual expedient, and dropped altogether a matter which so sorely burned their fingers.

A fact, very striking in view of the subsequent course of events, concerning Mr. Adams's relation with the slavery question, seems hitherto to have escaped the attention of those who have dealt with his career. It may as well find a place here as elsewhere in a narrative which it is difficult to make strictly chronological. Apparently he was the first to declare the doctrine, that the abolition of slavery could be lawfully accomplished by the exercise of the war powers of the Government. The earliest expression of this principle is found in a speech made by him in May, 1836, concerning the distribution of rations to fugitives from Indian hostilities in Alabama and Georgia. He then said: —

"From the instant that your slave-holding States become the theatre of war, civil, servile, or foreign,

from that instant the war powers of the Constitution extend to interference with the institution of slavery in every way in which it can be interfered with, from a claim of indemnity for slaves taken or destroyed, to a cession of the State burdened with slavery to a foreign power."

In June, 1841, he made a speech of which no report exists, but the contents of which may be in part learned from the replies and references to it which are on record. Therein he appears to have declared that slavery could be abolished in the exercise of the treaty-making power, having reference doubtless to a treaty concluding a war.

These views were of course mere abstract expressions of opinion as to the constitutionality of measures the real occurrence of which was anticipated by nobody. But, as the first suggestions of a doctrine in itself most obnoxious to the Southern theory and fundamentally destructive of the great Southern "institution" under perfectly possible circumstances, this enunciation by Mr. Adams gave rise to much indignation. Instead of allowing the imperfectly formulated principle to lose its danger in oblivion, the Southerners assailed it with vehemence. They taunted Mr. Adams with the opinion, as if merely to say that he held it was to damn him to everlasting infamy. The only result was that

they induced him to consider the matter more fully, and to express his belief more deliberately. In January, 1842, Mr. Wise attacked him upon this ground, and a month later Marshall followed in the same strain. These assaults were perhaps the direct incentive to what was said soon after by Mr. Adams, on April 14, 1842, in a speech concerning war with England and with Mexico, of which there was then some talk. Giddings, among other resolutions, had introduced one to the effect that the slave States had the exclusive right to be consulted on the subject of slavery. Mr. Adams said that he could not give his assent to this. One of the laws of war, he said, is

"that when a country is invaded, and two hostile armies are set in martial array, the commanders of both armies have power to emancipate all the slaves in the invaded territory."

He cited some precedents from South American history, and continued: —

"Whether the war be servile, civil, or foreign, I lay this down as the law of nations. I say that the military authority takes for the time the place of all municipal institutions, slavery among the rest. Under that state of things, so far from its being true that the States where slavery exists have the exclusive management of the subject, not only the President of the United States but the commander of the army has

power to order the universal emancipation of the slaves."

This declaration of constitutional doctrine was made with much positiveness and emphasis. There for many years the matter rested. The principle had been clearly asserted by Mr. Adams, angrily repudiated by the South, and in the absence of the occasion of war there was nothing more to be done in the matter. But when the exigency at last came, and the government of the United States was brought face to face with by far the gravest constitutional problem presented by the great rebellion, then no other solution presented itself save that which had been suggested twenty years earlier in the days of peace by Mr. Adams. It was in pursuance of the doctrine to which he thus gave the first utterance that slavery was forever abolished in the United States. Extracts from the last-quoted speech long stood as the motto of the "Liberator;" and at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation Mr. Adams was regarded as the chief and sufficient authority for an act so momentous in its effect, so infinitely useful in a matter of national extremity. But it was evidently a theory which had taken strong hold upon him. Besides the foregoing speeches there is an explicit statement of it in a letter which he wrote from Washington April 4, 1836, to

Hon. Solomon Lincoln, of Hingham, a friend and constituent. After touching upon other topics he says: —

"The new pretensions of the slave representation in Congress of a right to refuse to receive petitions, and that Congress have no constitutional power to abolish slavery or the slave-trade in the District of Columbia, forced upon me so much of the discussion as I did take upon me, but in which you are well aware I did not and could not speak a tenth part of my mind. I did not, for example, start the question whether by the law of God and of nature man can hold *property*, HEREDITARY property, in man. I did not start the question whether in the event of a servile insurrection and war, Congress would not have complete unlimited control over the whole subject of slavery, even to the emancipation of all the slaves in the State where such insurrection should break out, and for the suppression of which the freemen of Plymouth and Norfolk counties, Massachusetts, should be called by Acts of Congress to pour out their treasures and to shed their blood. Had I spoken my mind on these two points, the sturdiest of the abolitionists would have disavowed the sentiments of their champion."

The projected annexation of Texas, which became a battle-ground whereon the tide of conflict swayed so long and so fiercely to and fro, profoundly stirred Mr. Adams's indignation. It is, he said, "a question of far deeper

root and more overshadowing branches than any or all others that now agitate this country. . . . I had opened it by my speech . . . on the 25th May, 1836 — by far the most noted speech that I ever made." He based his opposition to the annexation upon constitutional objections, and on September 18, 1837, offered a resolution that "the power of annexing the people of any independent State to this Union is a power not delegated by the Constitution of the United States to their Congress or to any department of their government, but reserved to the people." The Speaker refused to receive the motion, or even allow it to be read, on the ground that it was not in order. Mr. Adams repeated substantially the same motion in June, 1838, then adding "that any attempt by act of Congress or by treaty to annex the Republic of Texas to this Union would be an usurpation of power which it would be the right and the duty of the free people of the Union to resist and annul." The story of his opposition to this measure is, however, so interwoven with his general antagonism to slavery, that there is little occasion for treating them separately.[1]

[1] In an address to his constituents in September, 1842, Mr. Adams spoke of his course concerning Texas. Having mentioned Mr. Van Buren's reply, declining the formal proposition made in 1837 by the Republic of Texas for annexation to the United States, he continued: "But the slave-breeding passion

People sometimes took advantage of his avowed principles concerning freedom of petition to put him in positions which they thought would embarrass him or render him ridiculous. Not much success, however, attended these foolish efforts of shallow wits. It was not easy to disconcert him or to take him at disadvantage. July 28, 1841, he presented a paper of this character coming from sundry Virginians and praying that all the free colored population should be sold or expelled from the country. He simply stated as he handed in the sheet that

for the annexation was not to be so disconcerted. At the ensuing session of Congress numerous petitions and memorials for and against the annexation were presented to the House, . . . and were referred to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, who, without ever taking them into consideration, towards the close of the session asked to be discharged from the consideration of them all. It was on this report that the debate arose, in which I disclosed the whole system of duplicity and perfidy towards Mexico, which had marked the Jackson Administration from its commencement to its close. It silenced the clamors for the annexation of Texas to this Union for three years till the catastrophe of the Van Buren Administration. The people of the free States were lulled into the belief that the whole project was abandoned, and that they should hear no more of slave-trade cravings for the annexation of Texas. Had Harrison lived they would have heard no more of them to this day, but no sooner was John Tyler installed in the President's House than nullification and Texas and war with Mexico rose again upon the surface, with eye steadily fixed upon the Polar Star of Southern slave-dealing supremacy in the government of the Union."

nothing could be more abhorrent to him than this prayer, and that his respect for the right of petition was his only motive for presenting this. It was suspended under the "gag" rule, and its promoters, unless very easily amused, must have been sadly disappointed with the fate and effect of their joke. On March 5, 1838, he received from Rocky Mount in Virginia a letter and petition praying that the House would arraign at its bar and forever expel John Quincy Adams. He presented both documents, with a resolution asking that they be referred to a committee for investigation and report. His enemies in the House saw that he was sure to have the best of the sport if the matter should be pursued, and succeeded in laying it on the table. Waddy Thompson thoughtfully improved the opportunity to mention to Mr. Adams that he also had received a petition, "numerously signed," praying for Mr. Adams's expulsion, but had never presented it. In the following May Mr. Adams presented another petition of like tenor. Dromgoole said that he supposed it was a "quiz," and that he would move to lay it on the table, "unless the gentleman from Massachusetts wished to give it another direction." Mr. Adams said that "the gentleman from Massachusetts cared very little about it," and it found the limbo of the "table."

To this same period belongs the memorable tale of Mr. Adams's attempt to present a petition from slaves. On February 6, 1837, he brought in some two hundred abolition petitions. He closed with one against the slave-trade in the District of Columbia purporting to be signed by "nine ladies of Fredericksburg, Virginia," whom he declined to name because, as he said, in the present disposition of the country, "he did not know what might happen to them if he did name them." Indeed, he added, he was not sure that the petition was genuine; he had said, when he began to present his petitions, that some among them were so peculiar that he was in doubt as to their genuineness, and this fell within the description. Apparently he had concluded and was about to take his seat, when he quickly caught up another sheet, and said that he held in his hand a paper concerning which he should wish to have the decision of the Speaker before presenting it. It purported to be a petition from twenty-two slaves, and he would like to know whether it came within the rule of the House concerning petitions relating to slavery. The Speaker, in manifest confusion, said that he could not answer the question until he knew the contents of the document. Mr. Adams, remarking that "it was one of those petitions

which had occurred to his mind as not being what it purported to be," proposed to send it up to the Chair for inspection. Objection was made to this, and the Speaker said that the circumstances were so extraordinary that he would take the sense of the House. That body, at first inattentive, now became interested, and no sooner did a knowledge of what was going on spread among those present than great excitement prevailed. Members were hastily brought in from the lobbies; many tried to speak, and from parts of the hall cries of "Expel him! Expel him!" were heard. For a brief interval no one of the enraged Southerners was equal to the unforeseen emergency. Mr. Haynes moved the rejection of the petition. Mr. Lewis deprecated this motion, being of opinion that the House must inflict punishment on the gentleman from Massachusetts. Mr. Haynes thereupon withdrew a motion which was so obviously inadequate to the vindictive gravity of the occasion. Mr. Grantland stood ready to second a motion to punish Mr. Adams, and Mr. Lewis said that if punishment should not be meted out it would "be better for the representatives from the slave-holding States to go home at once." Mr. Alford said that so soon as the petition should be presented he would move that it should "be taken from the

House and burned." At last Mr. Thompson got a resolution into shape as follows: —

"That the Hon. John Quincy Adams, by the attempt just made by him to introduce a petition purporting on its face to be from slaves, has been guilty of a gross disrespect to this House, and that he be instantly brought to the bar to receive the severe censure of the Speaker."

In supporting this resolution he said that Mr. Adams's action was in gross and wilful violation of the rules of the House and an insult to its members. He even threatened criminal proceedings before the grand jury of the District of Columbia, saying that if that body had the "proper intelligence and spirit" people might "yet see an incendiary brought to condign punishment." Mr. Haynes, not satisfied with Mr. Thompson's resolution, proposed a substitute to the effect that Mr. Adams had "rendered himself justly liable to the severest censure of this House and is censured accordingly." Then there ensued a little more excited speech-making and another resolution, that Mr. Adams,

"by his attempt to introduce into this House a petition from slaves for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, has committed an outrage on the feelings of the people of a large portion of this

Union; a flagrant contempt on the dignity of this House; and, by extending to slaves a privilege only belonging to freemen, directly incites the slave population to insurrection; and that the said member be forthwith called to the bar of the House and be censured by the Speaker."

Mr. Lewis remained of opinion that it might be best for the Southern members to go home, — a proposition which afterwards drew forth a flaming speech from Mr. Alford, who, far from inclining to go home, was ready to stay "until this fair city is a field of Waterloo and this beautiful Potomac a river of blood." Mr. Patton, of Virginia, was the first to speak a few words to bring members to their senses, pertinently asking whether Mr. Adams had "attempted to offer" this petition, and whether it did indeed pray for the abolition of slavery. It might be well, he suggested, for his friends to be sure of their facts before going further. Then at last Mr. Adams, who had not at all lost his head in the general hurly-burly, rose and said, that amid these numerous resolutions charging him with "high crimes and misdemeanors" and calling him to the bar of the House to answer for the same, he had thought it proper to remain silent until the House should take some action; that he did not suppose that, if he should be brought to the bar of the

House, he should be "struck mute by the previous question" before he should have been given an opportunity to "say a word or two" in his own defence. As to the facts: "I did not present the petition," he said, "and I appeal to the Speaker to say that I did not. . . . I intended to take the decision of the Speaker before I went one step towards presenting or offering to present that petition." The contents of the petition, should the House ever choose to read it, he continued, would render necessary some amendments at least in the last resolution, since the prayer was that slavery should *not* be abolished! "The gentleman from Alabama may perchance find, that the object of this petition is precisely what he desires to accomplish; and that these slaves who have sent this paper to me are his auxiliaries instead of being his opponents."

These remarks caused some discomfiture among the Southern members, who were glad to have time for deliberation given them by a maundering speech from Mr. Mann, of New York, who talked about "the deplorable spectacle shown off every petition day by the honorable member from Massachusetts in presenting the abolition petitions of his infatuated friends and constituents," charged Mr. Adams with running counter to the sense of the whole

country with a "violence paralleled only by the revolutionary madness of desperation," and twitted him with his political friendlessness, with his age, and with the insinuation of waning faculties and judgment. This little phial having been emptied, Mr. Thompson arose and angrily assailed Mr. Adams for contemptuously trifling with the House, which charge he based upon the entirely unproved assumption that the petition was not a genuine document. He concluded by presenting new resolutions better adapted to the recent development of the case: —

"1. That the Hon. John Quincy Adams, by an effort to present a petition from slaves, has committed a gross contempt of this House.

"2. That the member from Massachusetts abovenamed, by creating the impression and leaving the House under such impression, that the said petition was for the abolition of slavery, when he knew that it was not, has trifled with the House.

"3. That the Hon. John Quincy Adams receive the censure of the House for his conduct referred to in the preceding resolutions."

Mr. Pinckney said that the avowal by Mr. Adams that he had in his possession the petition of slaves was an admission of communication with slaves, and so was evidence of collusion with them; and that Mr. Adams had

thus rendered himself indictable for aiding and abetting insurrection. *A fortiori*, then, was he not amenable to the censure of the House? Mr. Haynes, of Georgia, forgetting that the petition had not been presented, announced his intention of moving that it should be rejected subject only to a permission for its withdrawal; another member suggested that, if the petition should be disposed of by burning, it would be well to commit to the same combustion the gentleman who presented it.

On the next day some more resolutions were ready, prepared by Dromgoole, who in his sober hours was regarded as the best parliamentarian in the Southern party. These were, that Mr. Adams

"by stating in his place that he had in his possession a paper purporting to be a petition from slaves, and inquiring if it came within the meaning of a resolution heretofore adopted (as preliminary to its presentation), has given color to the idea that slaves have the right of petition and of his readiness to be their organ; and that for the same he deserves the censure of the House.

"That the aforesaid John Quincy Adams receive a censure from the Speaker in the presence of the House of Representatives."

Mr. Alford, in advocating these resolutions, talked about "this awful crisis of our beloved

country." Mr. Robertson, though opposing the resolutions, took pains "strongly to condemn . . . the conduct of the gentleman from Massachusetts." Mr. Adams's colleague, Mr. Lincoln, spoke in his behalf, so also did Mr. Evans, of Maine; and Caleb Cushing made a powerful speech upon his side. Otherwise than this Mr. Adams was left to carry on the contest single-handed against the numerous array of assailants, all incensed and many fairly savage. Yet it is a striking proof of the dread in which even the united body of hot-blooded Southerners stood of this hard fighter from the North, that as the debate was drawing to a close, after they had all said their say and just before his opportunity came for making his elaborate speech of defence, they suddenly and opportunely became ready to content themselves with a mild resolution, which condemned generally the presentation of petitions from slaves, and, for the disposal of this particular case, recited that Mr. Adams had "solemnly disclaimed all design of doing anything disrespectful to the House," and had "avowed his intention not to offer to present" to the House the petition of this kind held by him; that "therefore all further proceedings in regard to his conduct do now cease." A sneaking effort by Mr. Vanderpoel to close Mr. Adams's mouth

by moving the previous question involved too much cowardice to be carried; and so on February 9 the sorely bated man was at last able to begin his final speech. He conducted his defence with singular spirit and ability, but at too great length to admit of even a sketch of what he said. He claimed the right of petition for slaves, and established it so far as argument can establish anything. He alleged that all he had done was to ask a question of the Speaker, and if he was to be censured for so doing, then how much more, he asked, was the Speaker deserving of censure who had even put the same question to the House, and given as his reason for so doing that it was not only of novel but of difficult import! He repudiated the idea that any member of the House could be held by a grand jury to respond for words spoken in debate, and recommended the gentlemen who had indulged in such preposterous threats "to study a little the first principles of civil liberty," excoriating them until they actually arose and tried to explain away their own language. He cast infinite ridicule upon the unhappy expression of Dromgoole, "giving color to an idea." Referring to the difficulty which he encountered by reason of the variety and disorder of the resolutions and charges against him with which "gentlemen from the South

had pounced down upon him like so many eagles upon a dove," — there was an exquisite sarcasm in the simile! — he said: "When I take up one idea, before I can give color to the idea, it has already changed its form and presents itself for consideration under other colors. . . . What defence can be made against this new crime of giving color to ideas?" As for trifling with the House by presenting a petition which in the course of debate had become pretty well known and acknowledged to be a hoax designed to lead Mr. Adams into a position of embarrassment and danger, he disclaimed any such motive, reminding members that he had given warning, when beginning to present his petitions, that he was suspicious that some among them might not be genuine.[1] But while denying all intention of trifling with

[1] Mr. Adams afterward said: "I believed the petition signed by female names to be genuine. . . . I had suspicions that the other, purporting to be from slaves, came really from the hand of a master who had prevailed on his slaves to sign it, that they might have the appearance of imploring the members from the North to cease offering petitions for their emancipation, which could have no other tendency than to aggravate their servitude, and of being so impatient under the operation of petitions in their favor as to pray that the Northern members who should persist in presenting them should be expelled." It was a part of the prayer of the petition that Mr. Adams should be expelled if he should continue to present abolition petitions.

the House, he rejected the mercy extended to him in the last of the long series of resolutions before that body. "I disclaim not," he said, "any particle of what I have done, not a single word of what I have said do I unsay; nay, I am ready to do and to say the same to-morrow." He had no notion of aiding in making a loophole through which his blundering enemies might escape, even though he himself should be accorded the privilege of crawling through it with them. At times during his speech "there was great agitation in the House," but when he closed no one seemed ambitious to reply. His enemies had learned anew a lesson, often taught to them before and often to be impressed upon them again, that it was perilous to come to close quarters with Mr. Adams. They gave up all idea of censuring him, and were content to apply a very mild emollient to their own smarting wounds in the shape of a resolution, to the effect that slaves did not possess the right of petition secured by the Constitution to the people of the United States.

In the winter of 1842–43 the questions arising out of the affair of the Creole rendered the position then held by Mr. Adams at the head of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs exceedingly distasteful to the slave-holders. On

January 21, 1842, a somewhat singular manifestation of this feeling was made when Mr. Adams himself presented a petition from Georgia praying for his removal from this Chairmanship. Upon this he requested to be heard in his own behalf. The Southern party, not sanguine of any advantage from debating the matter, tried to lay it on the table. The petition was alleged by Habersham, of Georgia, to be undoubtedly another hoax. But Mr. Adams, loath to lose a good opportunity, still claimed to be heard on the charges made against him by the "infamous slave-holders." Mr. Smith, of Virginia, said that the House had lately given Mr. Adams leave to defend himself against the charge of monomania, and asked whether he was doing so. Some members cried "Yes! Yes!"; others shouted "No! he is establishing the fact." The wrangling was at last brought to an end by the Speaker's declaration, that the petition must lie over for the present. But the scene had been only the prelude to one much longer, fiercer, and more exciting. No sooner was the document thus temporarily disposed of than Mr. Adams rose and presented the petition of forty-five citizens of Haverhill, Massachusetts, praying the House "immediately to adopt measures peaceably to dissolve the union of these States," for the alleged cause of the

incompatibility between free and slave-holding communities. He moved "its reference to a select committee, with instructions to report an answer to the petitioners showing the reasons why the prayer of it ought not to be granted."

In a moment the House was aflame with excitement. The numerous members who hated Mr. Adams thought that at last he was experiencing the divinely sent madness which foreruns destruction. Those who sought his political annihilation felt that the appointed and glorious hour of extinction had come; those who had writhed beneath the castigation of his invective exulted in the near revenge. While one said that the petition should never have been brought within the walls of the House, and another wished to burn it in the presence of the members, Mr. Gilmer, of Virginia, offered a resolution, that in presenting the petition Mr. Adams "had justly incurred the censure of the House." Some objection was made to this resolution as not being in order; but Mr. Adams said that he hoped that it would be received and debated and that an opportunity would be given him to speak in his own defence; "especially as the gentleman from Virginia had thought proper to play second fiddle to his colleague[1] from Accomac." Mr. Gilmer

[1] Henry A. Wise.

retorted that he "played second fiddle to no man. He was no fiddler, but was endeavoring to prevent the music of him who,

> 'In the space of one revolving moon,
> Was statesman, poet, fiddler, and buffoon.'"

The resolution was then laid on the table. The House rose, and Mr. Adams went home and noted in his Diary, "evening in meditation," for which indeed he had abundant cause. On the following day Thomas F. Marshall, of Kentucky, offered a substitute for Gilmer's resolution. This new fulmination had been prepared in a caucus of forty members of the slave-holding party, and was long and carefully framed. Its preamble recited, in substance, that a petition to dissolve the Union, proposing to Congress to destroy that which the several members had solemnly and officially sworn to support, was a "high breach of privilege, a contempt offered to this House, a direct proposition to the Legislature and each member of it to commit perjury, and involving necessarily in its execution and its consequences the destruction of our country and the crime of high treason:" wherefore it was to be resolved that Mr. Adams, in presenting a petition for dissolution, had "offered the deepest indignity to the House" and "an insult to the people;" that if "this outrage" should be "permitted to pass unrebuked and unpun-

ished" he would have "disgraced his country . . . in the eyes of the whole world;" that for this insult and this "wound at the Constitution and existence of his country, the peace, the security and liberty of the people of these States" he "might well be held to merit expulsion from the national councils;" and that "the House deem it an act of grace and mercy when they only inflict upon him their severest censure;" that so much they must do "for the maintenance of their own purity and dignity; for the rest they turned him over to his own conscience and the indignation of all true American citizens."

These resolutions were then advocated by Mr. Marshall at great length and with extreme bitterness. Mr. Adams replied shortly, stating that he should wish to make his full defence at a later stage of the debate. Mr. Wise followed in a personal and acrimonious harangue; Mr. Everett[1] gave some little assistance to Mr. Adams, and the House again adjourned. The following day Wise continued his speech, very elaborately. When he closed, Mr. Adams, who had "determined not to interrupt him till he had discharged his full cargo of filthy invective," rose to "make a preliminary point." He questioned the right of the House to entertain Marshall's resolutions since the preamble as-

[1] Horace Everett, of Vermont.

sumed him to be guilty of the crimes of subornation of perjury and treason, and the resolutions themselves censured him as if he had been found guilty; whereas in fact he had not been tried upon these charges and of course had not been convicted. If he was to be brought to trial upon them he asserted his right to have the proceedings conducted before a jury of his peers, and that the House was not a tribunal having this authority. But if he was to be tried for contempt, for which alone he could lawfully be tried by the House, still there were an hundred members sitting on its benches who were morally disqualified to judge him, who could not give him an impartial trial, because they were prejudiced and the question was one "on which their personal, pecuniary, and most sordid interests were at stake." Such considerations, he said, ought to prevent many gentlemen from voting, as Mr. Wise had avowed that they would prevent him. Here Wise interrupted to disavow that he was influenced by any such reasons, but rather, he said, by the "personal loathing, dread, and contempt I feel for the man." Mr. Adams, continuing after this pleasant interjection, admitted that he was in the power of the majority, who might try him against law and condemn him against right if they would.

"If they say they will try me, they must try me. If they say they will punish me, they must punish me. But if they say that in peace and mercy they will spare me expulsion, I disdain and cast away their mercy; and I ask them if they will come to such a trial and expel me. I defy them. I have constituents to go to who will have something to say if this House expels me. Nor will it be long before the gentlemen will see me here again."

Such was the fierce temper and indomitable courage of this inflexible old man! He flung contempt in the face of those who had him wholly in their power, and in the same breath in which he acknowledged that power he dared them to use it. He charged Wise with the guilt of innocent blood, in connection with certain transactions in a duel, and exasperated that gentleman into crying out that the "charge made by the gentleman from Massachusetts was as base and black a lie as the traitor was base and black who uttered it." When he was asked by the Speaker to put his point of order in writing, — his own request to the like effect in another case having been refused shortly before, — he tauntingly congratulated that gentleman "upon his discovery of the expediency of having points of order reduced to writing — a favor which he had repeatedly denied to me." When Mr. Wise was speaking, "I interrupted him oc-

casionally," says Mr. Adams, "sometimes to provoke him into absurdity." As usual he was left to fight out his desperate battle substantially single-handed. Only Mr. Everett occasionally helped him a very little; while one or two others who spoke against the resolutions were careful to explain that they felt no personal good will towards Mr. Adams. But he faced the odds courageously. It was no new thing for him to be pitted alone against a "solid South." Outside the walls of the House he had some sympathy and some assistance tendered him by individuals, among others by Rufus Choate then in the Senate, and by his own colleagues from Massachusetts. This support aided and cheered him somewhat, but could not prevent substantially the whole burden of the labor and brunt of the contest from bearing upon him alone. Among the external manifestations of feeling, those of hostility were naturally largely in the ascendant. The newspapers of Washington — the "Globe" and the "National Intelligencer" — which reported the debates, daily filled their columns with all the abuse and invective which was poured forth against him, while they gave the most meagre statements, or none at all, of what he said in his own defence. Among other amenities he received from North Carolina an anonymous letter threatening him with assas-

sination, having also an engraved portrait of him with the mark of a rifle-ball in the forehead, and the motto "to stop the music of John Quincy Adams," etc., etc. This missive he read and displayed in the House, but it was received with profound indifference by men who would not have greatly objected to the execution of the barbarous threat.

The prolonged struggle cost him deep anxiety and sleepless nights, which in the declining years of a laborious life told hardly upon his aged frame. But against all odds of numbers and under all disadvantages of circumstances the past repeated itself, and Mr. Adams alone won a victory over all the cohorts of the South. Several attempts had been made during the debate to lay the whole subject on the table. Mr. Adams said that he would consent to this simply because his defence would be a very long affair, and he did not wish to have the time of the House consumed and the business of the nation brought to a stand solely for the consideration of his personal affairs. These propositions failing, he began his speech and soon was making such headway that even his adversaries were constrained to see that the opportunity which they had conceived to be within their grasp was eluding them, as had so often happened before. Accordingly on February 7 the

motion to "lay the whole subject on the table forever" was renewed and carried by one hundred and six votes to ninety-three. The House then took up the original petition and refused to receive it by one hundred and sixty-six to forty. No sooner was this consummation reached than the irrepressible champion rose to his feet and proceeded with his budget of anti-slavery petitions, of which he "presented nearly two hundred, till the House adjourned."

Within a very short time there came further and convincing proof that Mr. Adams was victor. On February 26 he writes: "D. D. Barnard told me he had received a petition from his District, signed by a small number of very respectable persons, praying for a dissolution of the Union. He said he did not know what to do with it. I dined with him." By March 14 this dinner bore fruit. Mr. Barnard had made up his mind "what to do with it." He presented it, with a motion that it be referred to a select committee with instructions to report adversely to its prayer. The well-schooled House now took the presentation without a ripple of excitement, and was content with simply voting not to receive the petition.

In the midst of the toil and anxiety imposed upon Mr. Adams by this effort to censure and disgrace him, the scheme, already referred to,

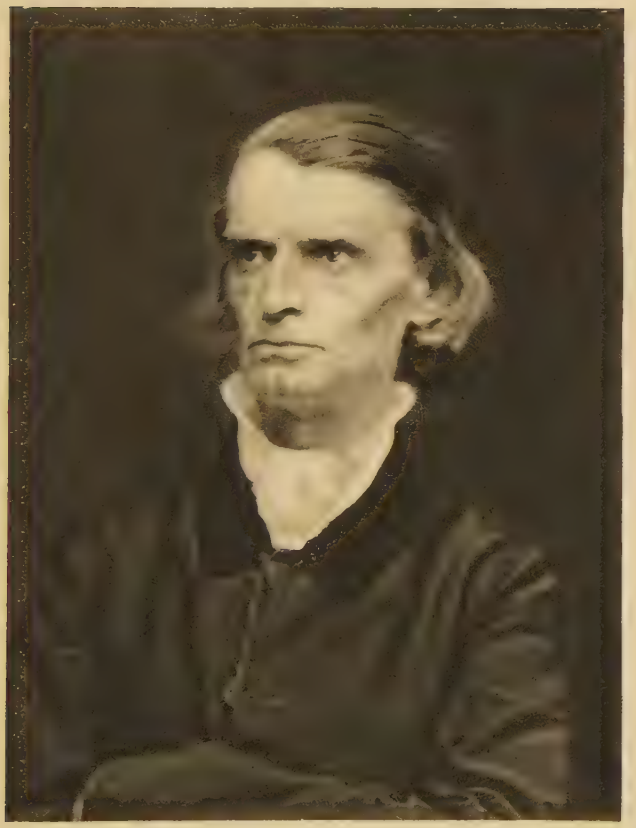
for displacing him from the chairmanship of the Committee on Foreign Affairs had been actively prosecuted. He was notified that the Southern members had formed a cabal for removing him and putting Caleb Cushing in his place. The plan was, however, temporarily checked, and so soon as Mr. Adams had triumphed in the House the four Southern members of the committee sent to the House a paper begging to be excused from further services on the committee, "because from recent occurrences it was doubtful whether the House would remove the chairman, and they were unwilling to serve with one in whom they had no confidence." The fugitives were granted, "by a shout of acclamation," the excuse which they sought for so welcome a reason, and the same was also done for a fifth member. Three more of the same party, nominated to fill these vacancies, likewise asked to be excused, and were so. Their letters preferring this request were "so insulting personally" to Mr. Adams as to constitute "gross breaches of privilege." "The Speaker would have refused to receive or present them had they referred to any other man in the House." They were published, but Mr. Adams, after some hesitation, determined not to give them the importance which would result from any public notice in the House upon his part. He could afford to keep silence, and judged wisely in doing so.

Amid all the animosity and rancor entertained towards Mr. Adams, there yet lurked a degree of respect for his courage, honesty, and ability which showed itself upon occasion, doubtless not a little to the surprise of the members themselves who were hardly conscious that they entertained such sentiments until startled into a manifestation of them. An eminent instance of this is to be found in the story of the troubled days preceding the organization of the twenty-sixth Congress. On December 2, 1839, the members elect of that body came together in Washington, with the knowledge that the seats of five gentlemen from New Jersey, who brought with them the regular gubernatorial certificate of their election, would be contested by five other claimants. According to custom Garland, clerk of the last House, called the assemblage to order and began the roll-call. When he came to New Jersey he called the name of one member from that State, and then said that there were five other seats which were contested, and that not feeling authorized to decide the dispute he would pass over the names of the New Jersey members and proceed with the roll till the House should be formed, when the question could be decided. Plausible as appeared this abstention from an exercise of authority in so grave a dispute, it

was nevertheless really an assumption and not a deprecation of power, and as such was altogether unjustifiable. The clerk's sole business was to call the names of those persons who presented the usual formal credentials; he had no right to take cognizance that the seats of any such persons might be the subject of a contest, which could properly be instituted, conducted, and determined only before and by the House itself when organized. But his course was not innocent of a purpose. So evenly was the House divided that the admission or exclusion of these four members in the first instance would determine the political complexion of the body. The members holding the certificates were Whigs; if the clerk could keep them out until the organization of the House should be completed, then the Democrats would control that organization, would elect their Speaker, and through him would make up the committees.

Naturally enough this arrogation of power by the clerk, the motives and consequences of which were abundantly obvious, raised a terrible storm. The debate continued till four o'clock in the afternoon, when a motion was made to adjourn. The clerk said that he could put no question, not even of adjournment, till the House should be formed. But there was a general cry to adjourn, and the clerk declared the House

adjourned. Mr. Adams went home and wrote in his Diary that the clerk's "two decisions form together an insurmountable objection to the transaction of any business, and an impossibility of organizing the House. . . . The most curious part of the case is, that his own election as clerk depends upon the exclusion of the New Jersey members." The next day was consumed in a fierce debate as to whether the clerk should be allowed to read an explanatory statement. Again the clerk refused to put the question of adjournment, but, "upon inspection," declared an adjournment. Some called out "a count! a count!" while most rushed out of the hall, and Wise cried loudly, "Now we are a mob!" The next day there was more violent debating, but no progress towards a decision. Various party leaders offered resolutions, none of which accomplished anything. The condition was ridiculous, disgraceful, and not without serious possibilities of danger. Neither did any light of encouragement break in any quarter. In the crisis there seemed, by sudden consent of all, to be a turning towards Mr. Adams. Prominent men of both parties came to him and begged him to interfere. He was reluctant to plunge into the embroilment; but the great urgency and the abundant assurances of support placed little less than actual compulsion upon him.



Henry A. Wise

Accordingly on December 5 he rose to address the House. He was greeted as a *Deus ex machina*. Not speaking to the clerk, but turning directly to the assembled members, he began: "Fellow citizens! Members elect of the twenty-sixth Congress!" He could not resist the temptation of administering a brief but severe and righteous castigation to Garland; and then, ignoring that functionary altogether, proceeded to beg the House to *organize itself*. To this end he said that he would offer a resolution "ordering the clerk to call the members from New Jersey possessing the credentials from the Governor of that State." There had been already no lack of resolutions, but the difficulty lay in the clerk's obstinate refusal to put the question upon them. So now the puzzled cry went up: "How shall the question be put?" "I intend to put the question myself," said the dauntless old man, wholly equal to the emergency. A tumult of applause resounded upon all sides. Rhett, of South Carolina, sprang up and offered a resolution, that Williams, of North Carolina, the oldest member of the House, be appointed chairman of the meeting; but upon objection by Williams, he substituted the name of Mr. Adams, and put the question. He was "answered by an almost universal shout in the affirmative." Whereupon Rhett and Williams

conducted the old man to the chair. It was a proud moment. Wise, of Virginia, afterward said, addressing a complimentary speech to Mr. Adams, "and if, when you shall be gathered to your fathers, I were asked to select the words which in my judgment are calculated to give at once the best character of the man, I would inscribe upon your tomb this sentence, 'I will put the question myself!'" Doubtless Wise and a good many more would have been glad enough to put almost any epitaph on a tombstone for Mr. Adams.[1] It must, however, be acknowledged that the impetuous Southerners behaved very handsomely by their arch foe on this occasion, and were for once as chivalrous in fact as they always were in profession.

Smooth water had by no means been reached when Mr. Adams was placed at the helm; on the contrary, the buffeting became only the more severe when the members were no longer restrained by a lurking dread of grave disaster if not of utter shipwreck. Between two bitterly incensed and evenly divided parties engaged in a struggle for an important prize, Mr. Adams, having no strictly lawful authority pertaining

[1] Not quite two years later, pending a motion to reprimand Mr. Wise for fighting with a member on the floor of the House, that gentleman took pains insultingly to say, "that there was but one man in the House whose judgment he was unwilling to abide by," and that man was Mr. Adams.

to his singular and anomalous position, was hard taxed to perform his functions. It is impossible to follow the intricate and acrimonious quarrels of the eleven days which succeeded until on December 16, upon the eleventh ballot, R. M. T. Hunter, of Virginia, was elected Speaker, and Mr. Adams was relieved from the most arduous duty imposed upon him during his life. In the course of the debates there had been "much vituperation and much equally unacceptable compliment" lavished upon him. After the organization of the House, there was some talk of moving a vote of thanks, but he entreated that it should not be done. "In the rancorous and bitter temper of the Administration party, exasperated by their disappointment in losing their Speaker, the resolution of thanks," he said, "would have been lost if it had been offered." However this might have been, history has determined this occurrence to have been one of the most brilliant episodes in a life which had many distinctions.

A few incidents indicative of respect must have been welcome enough in the solitary fight-laden career of Mr. Adams. He needed some occasional encouragement to keep him from sinking into despondency; for though he was of so unyielding and belligerent a disposition, of such ungracious demeanor, so uncompromising

with friend and foe, yet he was a man of deep and strong feelings, and in a way even very sensitive though a proud reserve kept the secret of this quality so close that few suspected it. His Diary during his Congressional life shows a man doing his duty sternly rather than cheerfully, treading resolutely a painful path, having the reward which attends upon a clear conscience, but neither light-hearted nor often even happy. Especially he was frequently disappointed at the returns which he received from others, and considered himself "ill-treated by every public man whom circumstances had brought into competition with him;" they had returned his "acts of kindness and services" with "gross injustice." The reflection did not induce him to deflect his course in the least, but it was made with much bitterness of spirit. Toward the close of 1835 he writes: —

"Among the dark spots in human nature which in the course of my life I have observed, the devices of rivals to ruin me have been sorry pictures of the heart of man. . . . H. G. Otis, Theophilus Parsons, Timothy Pickering, James A. Bayard, Henry Clay, Jonathan Russell, William H. Crawford, John C. Calhoun, Andrew Jackson, Daniel Webster, and John Davis, W. B. Giles, and John Randolph, have used up their faculties in base and dirty tricks to thwart my progress in life and destroy my character."

Truly a long and exhaustive list of enmities! One can but suspect that a man of so many quarrels must have been quarrelsome. Certain it is, however, that in nearly every difference which Mr. Adams had in his life a question of right and wrong, of moral or political principle, had presented itself to him. His intention was always good, though his manner was so habitually irritating. He himself says that to nearly all these men — Russell alone specifically excepted — he had "returned good for evil," that he had "never wronged any one of them," and had even "neglected too much his self-defence against them." In October, 1833, he said: "I subject myself to so much toil and so much enmity, with so very little apparent fruit, that I sometimes ask myself whether I do not mistake my own motives. The best actions of my life make me nothing but enemies." In February, 1841, he made a powerful speech in castigation of Henry A. Wise, who had been upholding in Southern fashion slavery, duelling, and nullification. He received afterward some messages of praise and sympathy, but noted with pain that his colleagues thought it one of his "eccentric, wild, extravagant freaks of passion;" and with a pathetic sense of loneliness he adds: "All around me is cold and discouraging and my own feelings are wound up to a pitch

that my reason can scarcely endure." A few days later he had the pleasure of hearing one of the members say, in a speech, that there was an opinion among many that Mr. Adams was insane and did not know what he said. While a fight was going on such incidents only fired his blood, but afterwards the reminiscence affected his spirits cruelly.

In August, 1840, he writes that he has been twelve years submitting in silence to the "foulest and basest aspersions," to which it would have been waste of time to make reply, since the public ear had not been open to him. "Is the time arriving," he asks, "for me to speak? or must I go down to the grave and leave posterity to do justice to my father and to me?"

He has had at least the advantage of saying his say to posterity in a very effective and convincing shape in that Diary, which so discomfited and enraged General Jackson. There is plain enough speaking in its pages, which were a safety valve whereby much wrath escaped. Mr. Adams had the faculty of forcible expression when he chose to employ it, as may be seen from a few specimen sentences. On March 28, 1840, he remarks that Atherton "this day emitted half an hour of his rotten breath against" a pending bill. Atherton was infamous as the mover of the "gag" resolution, and Mr. Adams

abhorred him accordingly. Duncan, of Cincinnati, mentioned as "delivering a dose of balderdash," is described as "the prime bully of the Kinderhook Democracy," without "perception of any moral distinction between truth and falsehood, . . . a thorough-going hack-demagogue, coarse, vulgar, and impudent, with a vein of low humor exactly suited to the rabble of a popular city and equally so to the taste of the present House of Representatives." Other similar bits of that pessimism and belief in the deterioration of the times, so common in old men, occasionally appear. In August, 1835, he thinks that "the signs of the times are portentous. All the tendencies of legislation are to the removal of restrictions from the vicious and the guilty, and to the exercise of all the powers of government, legislative, judicial, and executive, by lawless assemblages of individuals." December 27, 1838, he looks upon the Senate and the House, "the cream of the land, the culled darlings of fifteen millions," and observes that "the remarkable phenomenon that they present is the level of intellect and of morals upon which they stand; and this universal mediocrity is the basis upon which the liberties of this nation repose." In July, 1840, he thinks that

"parties are falling into profligate factions. I have seen this before; but the worst symptom now is

the change in the manners of the people. The continuance of the present Administration . . . will open wide all the flood-gates of corruption. Will a change produce reform? Pause and ponder! Slavery, the Indians, the public lands, the collection and disbursement of public money, the tariff, and foreign affairs: — what is to become of them?"

On January 29, 1841, Henry A. Wise uttered "a motley compound of eloquence and folly, of braggart impudence and childish vanity, of self-laudation and Virginian narrow-mindedness." After him Hubbard, of Alabama, "began grunting against the tariff." Three days later Black, of Georgia, "poured forth his black bile" for an hour and a half. The next week we find Clifford, of Maine, "muddily bothering his trickster invention" to get over a rule of the House, and "snapping like a mackerel at a red rag" at the suggestion of a way to do so. In July, 1841, we again hear of Atherton as a "cross-grained numskull . . . snarling against the loan bill." With such peppery passages in great abundance the Diary is thickly and piquantly besprinkled. They are not always pleasant, perhaps not even always amusing, but they display the marked element of censoriousness in Mr. Adams's character, which it is necessary to appreciate in order to understand some parts of his career.

If Mr. Adams never had the cheerful support of popularity, so neither did he often have the encouragement of success. He said that he was paying in his declining years for the good luck which had attended the earlier portion of his life. On December 14, 1833, he calculates that he has three fourths of the people of Massachusetts against him, and by estranging the anti-Masons he is about to become obnoxious to the whole. "My public life will terminate by the alienation from me of all mankind. . . . It is the experience of all ages that the people grow weary of old men. I cannot flatter myself that I shall escape the common law of our nature." Yet he acknowledges that he is unable to "abstract himself from the great questions which agitate the country." Soon after he again writes in the same vein: "To be forsaken by all mankind seems to be the destiny that awaits my last days." August 6, 1835, he gives as his reason for not accepting an invitation to deliver a discourse, that "instead of having any beneficial influence upon the public mind, it would be turned as an instrument of obloquy against myself." So it had been, as he enumerates, with his exertions against Freemasonry, his labors for internal improvement, for the manufacturing interest, for domestic industry, for free labor, for the

disinterested aid then lately brought by him to Jackson in the dispute with France; "so it will be to the end of my political life."

When to unpopularity and reiterated disappointment we add the physical ills of old age, it no longer surprises us to find Mr. Adams at times harsh and bitter beyond the excuse of the occasion. That he was a man of strong physique and of extraordinary powers of endurance, often surpassing those of young and vigorous men, is evident. For example, one day in March, 1840, he notes incidentally: "I walked home and found my family at dinner. From my breakfast yesterday morning until one this afternoon, twenty-eight hours, I had fasted." Many a time he showed like, if not quite equal vigor. But he had been a hard worker all his life, and testing the powers of one's constitution does not tend to their preservation; he was by no means free from the woes of the flesh or from the depression which comes with years and the dread of decrepitude. Already as early as October 7, 1833, he fears that his health is "irretrievable;" he gets but five hours a night of "disturbed unquiet sleep — full of tossings." February 17, 1834, his "voice was so hoarse and feeble that it broke repeatedly, and he could scarcely articulate. It is gone forever," he very mistakenly but despondingly adds, "and it is

in vain for me to contend against the decay of time and nature." His enemies found little truth in this foreboding for many sessions thereafter. Only a year after he had performed his feat of fasting for twenty-eight hours of business, he received a letter from a stranger advising him to retire. He admits that perhaps he ought to do so, but says that more than sixty years of public life have made activity necessary to him; it is the "weakness of his nature" which he has "intellect enough left to perceive but not energy to control," so that "the world will retire from me before I shall retire from the world."

The brief sketch which can be given in a volume of this size of so long and so busy a life does not suffice even to indicate all its many industries. The anti-slavery labors of Mr. Adams during his Congressional career were alone an abundant occupation for a man in the prime of life; but to these he added a wonderful list of other toils and interests. He was not only an incessant student in history, politics, and literature, but he also constantly invaded the domain of science. He was Chairman of the Congressional Committee on the Smithsonian bequest, and for several years he gave much time and attention to it, striving to give the fund a direction in favor of science;

he hoped to make it subservient to a plan which he had long cherished for the building of a noble national observatory. He had much committee work; he received many visitors; he secured hours of leisure for his favorite pursuit of composing poetry; he delivered an enormous number of addresses and speeches upon all sorts of occasions; he conducted an extensive correspondence; he was a very devout man, regularly going to church and reading three chapters in his Bible every day; and he kept up faithfully his colossal Diary. For several months in the midst of Congressional duties he devoted great labor, thought, and anxiety to the famous cause of the slaves of the Amistad, in which he was induced to act as counsel before the Supreme Court. Such were the labors of his declining age. To men of ordinary calibre the multiplicity of his acquirements and achievements is confounding and incredible. He worked his brain and his body as unsparingly as if they had been machines insensible to the pleasure or necessity of rest. Surprisingly did they submit to his exacting treatment, lasting in good order and condition far beyond what was then the average of life and vigorous faculties among his contemporaries engaged in public affairs.

In August, 1842, while he was still tarrying

in the unwholesome heats of Washington, he had some symptoms which he thought premonitory, and he speaks of the next session of Congress as probably the last which he should ever attend. March 25, 1844, he gives a painful sketch of himself. Physical disability, he says, must soon put a stop to his Diary. That morning he had risen "at four, and with smarting, bloodshot eyes and shivering hand, still sat down and wrote to fill up the chasm of the closing days of last week." If his remaining days were to be few he was at least resolved to make them long for purposes of unremitted labor.

But he had one great joy and distinguished triumph still in store for him. From the time when the "gag" rule had been first established, Mr. Adams had kept up an unbroken series of attacks upon it at all times and by all means. At the beginning of the several sessions, when the rules were established by the House, he always moved to strike out this one. Year after year his motion was voted down, but year after year he renewed it with invincible perseverance. The majorities against him began to dwindle till they became almost imperceptible; in 1842 it was a majority of four; in 1843, of three; in 1844 the struggle was protracted for weeks, and Mr. Adams all but carried the day. It was evident that victory was

not far off, and a kind fate had destined him to live not only to see but himself to win it. On December 3, 1844, he made his usual motion and called for the yeas and nays; a motion was made to lay his motion on the table, and upon that also the question was taken by yeas and nays — eighty-one yeas, one hundred and four nays, and his motion was *not* laid on the table. The question was then put upon it, and it was carried by the handsome vote of one hundred and eight to eighty. In that moment the "gag" rule became a thing of the past, and Mr. Adams had conquered in his last fight. "Blessed, forever blessed, be the name of God!" he writes in recording the event. A week afterwards some anti-slavery petitions were received and actually referred to the Committee on the District of Columbia. This glorious consummation having been achieved, this advanced stage in the long conflict having been reached, Mr. Adams could not hope for life to see another goal passed. His work was nearly done; he had grown aged, and had worn himself out faithfully toiling in the struggle which must hereafter be fought through its coming phases and to its final success by others, younger men than he, though none of them certainly having over him any other militant advantage save only the accident of youth.

His mental powers were not less than at any time in the past when, on November 19, 1846, he was struck by paralysis in the street in Boston. He recovered from the attack, however, sufficiently to resume his duties in Washington some three months later. His reappearance in the House was marked by a pleasing incident: all the members rose together; business was for the moment suspended; his old accustomed seat was at once surrendered to him by the gentleman to whom it had fallen in the allotment, and he was formally conducted to it by two members. After this, though punctual in attendance, he only once took part in debate. On February 21, 1848, he appeared in his seat as usual. At half past one in the afternoon the Speaker was rising to put a question, when he was suddenly interrupted by cries of "Stop! Stop! — Mr. Adams!" Some gentlemen near Mr. Adams had thought that he was striving to rise to address the Speaker, when in an instant he fell over insensible. The members thronged around him in great confusion. The House hastily adjourned. He was placed on a sofa and removed first to the hall of the rotunda and then to the Speaker's room. Medical men were in attendance but could be of no service in the presence of death. The stern old fighter lay dying almost on the very field of so many battles and in the

very tracks in which he had so often stood erect and unconquerable, taking and dealing so many mighty blows. Late in the afternoon some inarticulate mutterings were construed into the words, "Thank the officers of the House." Soon again he said intelligibly, "This is the last of earth! I am content!" It was his extreme utterance. He lay thereafter unconscious till the evening of the 23d, when he passed quietly away.

He lies buried "under the portal of the church at Quincy" beside his wife, who survived him four years, his father and his mother. The memorial tablet inside the church bears upon it the words "Alteri Sæculo," — surely never more justly or appropriately applied to any man than to John Quincy Adams, hardly abused and cruelly misappreciated in his own day but whom subsequent generations already begin to honor as one of the greatest of American statesmen, not only preëminent in ability and acquirements, but even more to be honored for profound, immutable honesty of purpose and broad, noble humanity of aims.

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